

**CRAFTING LAGRANGE: A SOUTHERN TOWN'S SEARCH FOR HISTORICAL
IDENTITY IN THE 1970s**

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CRAFTING LAGRANGE: A SOUTHERN TOWN'S SEARCH FOR HISTORICAL
IDENTITY IN THE 1970s

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BY

RACHAEL S. COFIELD

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CRAFTING LAURANCE: A SOUTHERN TOWN'S SEARCH FOR HISTORICAL IDENTITY IN THE 1970s

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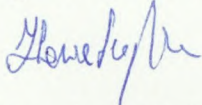
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ABSTRACT

This thesis looks at the 1976 bicentennial of the American Revolution. Many towns across the United States took part in, or planned their own, celebrations to commemorate national history. Yet in many cases these town celebrations also memorialized a local and individual history. LaGrange, Georgia, was one such town. LaGrange claimed a personal tie to the bicentennial because of its asserted connection to the American Revolutionary hero Marquis de Lafayette, who related the area near Troup County to his French estate. This French connection led to a statue being placed in the LaGrange town square in 1976. By focusing on the planning, correspondence, and public events involving the bicentennial celebrations and the placement of the Lafayette statue this thesis intends to assess how a historical identity created by and perpetuated by the elite results in the concealment of local economic and racial strife. The Troup County Archives and the LaGrange College Archives contained much of the primary source materials for this research. By looking at this case study I hope to explore the larger idea of public spectacle and creation of culture and tradition within societies.

INDEX WORDS: Historical memory, Commemoration, Collective Memory, Economic Revitalization, Preservation, Georgia History, Lafayette, LaGrange, and Urban Issues

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A thesis submitted to the College of Letters and Science in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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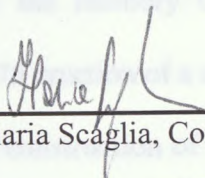
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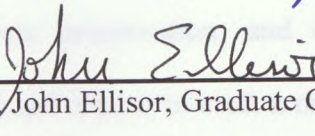
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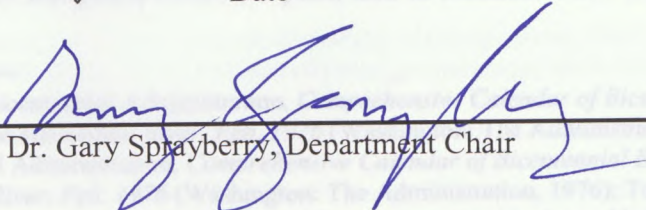
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Introduction

In the 1970s, fervor for the bicentennial of the American Revolution gripped many cities across the United States.¹ As a result, numerous national and local planning committees to organize celebrations were established all over the country. In the town of LaGrange, located south of Atlanta, in Georgia, one of these committees coordinated the events marking the occasion of American Independence from Great Britain. Remarkably, the town tied its festivities to the American Revolutionary hero Marquis de Lafayette, who had allegedly paid a visit in 1825 and expressed that the area reminded him of La Grange, his French estate. Flattered by the compliment, the town adopted this name. In the following decades, this local legend continued to fuel interest in the town's history and provided LaGrange with the means to connect itself to both French culture and the Revolution. Prominent town planners and bicentennial committee members sought to further revive the memory of Lafayette during the 1970s, forming a movement that culminated in the 1975 erection of a statue of Lafayette in the main town square.

By looking at the process of construction of the statue of the Marquis de Lafayette – and of the imagined past it represents – this thesis explores the complex dynamics through which LaGrange built its local identity to explore larger themes in American history such as collective memory, racial tensions, historic preservation, and economic revitalization. The case of LaGrange demonstrates how the movement to craft a new identity originated from an effort to re-emphasize the city's long history (in contrast with newer, less historic counterparts) and beauty; to connect to a real or imagined historical past; and to reminisce for the “good old days”

¹ American Revolution Bicentennial Administration, *Comprehensive Calendar of Bicentennial Events: Event Details for States West of the Mississippi River, Feb. 1976* (Washington: The Administration, 1976); American Revolution Bicentennial Administration, *Comprehensive Calendar of Bicentennial Events: Event Details for States East of the Mississippi River, Feb. 1976* (Washington: The Administration, 1976); Tammy Stone-Gordon, *The Spirit of 1976: Commerce, Community, and the Politics of Commemoration* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2013).

of the town's economic and moral golden age by fostering an authentic American spirit or ideal. After the troubles of the 1960s, when whiteness became associated with racism and violence, LaGrange redefined itself as the rightful heir of a genteel past, embraced by people interested in history and culture and disconnected from the most uncomfortable chapters of its history.

Historiography and Context

Numerous historians have devoted much attention to the economic structure of mill towns like LaGrange at a time when the mills were booming.² Few, however, have considered how by the 1970s the mill economy had receded and given way to new markets. By the end of World War II, these new market-oriented industries stood poised to infiltrate the region. Low-wage industries such as textiles, apparel, and lumber still dominated the local economy but the war spurred the demand for new goods.³ Indeed, in the 1960s and 1970s, a "new Georgia" arose, pursuing economic growth and progress. This thesis places LaGrange in this context, providing an in-depth look at how the town overcame the decline of its mill economy, reinventing itself as a city of refinement through its connection with Lafayette.

Long-standing problems such as issues of poverty and civil rights violations continued well after the pronouncement of this new age for Georgia.⁴ Many scholars focused strictly on the major urban centers of Atlanta and Savannah during the Civil Rights Era, leaving out many small to medium-sized towns such as LaGrange.⁵ Such works thus provide little context outside of the

² Kenneth Coleman, *A History of Georgia* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1991), 360 and 274; Donna Jean Whitley, *Fuller E. Callaway and Textile Mill Development in LaGrange, 1895-1920* (New York: Garland Pub, 1989).

³ James C. Cobb, *Georgia Odyssey: A Short History of the State* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2008), 64.

⁴ Christopher C. Meyers, *The Empire State of the South: Georgia History in Documents and Essays* (Macon, Ga: Mercer University Press, 2008), 321. Carl E. Sanders popularized the term "new Georgia" when he ran for governor in 1962.

⁵ Coleman, *A History of Georgia*, 386-387. A major exception to this is Stephen Tuck's *Beyond Atlanta*.

sites of major civil rights struggle.⁶ While this scholarship noted the changes taking place in larger cities, such as proliferation of the arts, theater, sports, cultural events, and historic preservation, little attention has been paid to less-known places where the legacy of racial tensions was still quite strong. Deep into the 1960s, preserving white supremacy in the region remained a major political objective in the small-town south. Promoting economic changes served as a secondary aim, though often the two goals intermingled.⁷ This study of LaGrange demonstrates that the wounds of racial strife greatly influenced the process of identity-building in these towns well into the 1970s, shedding light on the later pages of civil rights history.

These issues have been addressed in part by geographers, who studied urban phenomena in relation to historic preservation and urban renewal. In his article, "Islands of Renewal in Seas of Decay," Brian J. L. Berry argued that preservation – of homes in particular – was halted by a weak urban core.⁸ In many cases the central areas of cities went through restoration programs as citizens moved towards the core. Berry cited cross-cultural polling data collected from local citizens to understand how people moved into the center of cities and why they decided to live in particular neighborhoods and homes. He found that people often migrated inward, with polling data indicating that transportation and aesthetics weighed heavily on their minds when determining where they desired to live. This migration intermingled with the idea to preserve

⁶ Tomiko Brown-Nagin, *Courage to Dissent: Atlanta and the Long History of the Civil Rights Movement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Tamar Jacoby, *Someone Else's House: America's Unfinished Struggle for Integration* (New York: Free Press, 1998); James Haskins and Benny Andrews, *Delivering Justice: W.W. Law and the Fight for Civil Rights* (Cambridge, Mass: Candlewick Press, 2005).

⁷ Cobb, *Georgia Odyssey*, 64-65.

⁸ Brian J.L. Berry, "Islands of Renewal in Seas of Decay," in *The New Urban Reality*, edited by Paul E. Peterson, 72-73 (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1985). Other authors also assessed the matter of preservation in cities, noting the ties between urban renewal and local history. Karolin Frank, *Historic Preservation in the USA* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2002); Richard C. Collins, Elizabeth B. Waters, and A. Bruce Dotson, *America's Downtowns: Growth Politics and Preservation* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1991). However, this was not only a phenomenon occurring in the United States, as preservation had appeal world-wide. Heike Oevermann and Harald A Mieg, *Industrial Heritage Sites in Transformation: Clash of Discourses* (New York: Routledge, 2015); Yue Zhang, *The Fragmented Politics of Urban Preservation: Beijing, Chicago, and Paris* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013).

certain central locations.⁹ Urban historian Andrew Hurley also argued that there was a definite push to promote local history as a means to encourage city revitalization. He shows how such history was integrated into city planning in the hopes that it would boost the local areas.¹⁰ This thesis builds on this literature by explaining the motivations behind the preservationist movement in LaGrange.

Historian David J. Russo explored how American cities changed and how those that lived in such areas viewed their towns. He argued that as small towns grew into large cities Americans began to feel nostalgic for the notion of a small, close-knit society and therefore attempted to recapture this ideal in these larger towns. They did so in myriad ways, but almost always attempted to re-create a town experience based on local history.¹¹ Other scholars studied specific parts of the cityscape in their historical overview. In his book, *Downtown: Its Rise and Fall*, urban historian Robert M. Fogelson provided a thorough look at downtown areas, including not only the history of the area themselves but also the history of the peoples' sentiments regarding "downtown." His work demonstrated that city planners and organizers often made plans to revitalize downtown areas to the detriment of other parts of town.¹² Previous case studies lacked analysis of how cities with little historical background have transformed themselves based on a historical theme. The case of LaGrange offers insight into the planning of cities in regards to historical memory and creation and explains how a city changed according to how city planners and citizens viewed its growth (or lack thereof).

⁹ Berry, "Islands of Renewal in Seas of Decay," 87.

¹⁰ Andrew Hurley, *Beyond Preservation: Using Public History to Revitalize Inner Cities* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2010).

¹¹ David J. Russo, *American Towns: An Interpretive History* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2001).

¹² Robert M. Fogelson, *Downtown: Its Rise and Fall, 1880-1950* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001).

This study also shows how race relations and social attitudes played a pivotal role in city planning. Some scholars tracked the evolution of city development after the Civil War, providing historical context on how racialized zones were created by racist sentiments and policy making regarding specific races. For instance, James W. Loewen described "sundown towns" with signs around their borders warning African Americans and other minorities to stay off the streets after dark.¹³ Gary Orfield explained the effects of ghettoization and suburbanization on modern cities, looking at metropolitan Chicago to argue that residential segregation was a key contemporary institution for creating and maintaining inequality. In this context, he pointed out that this was a problem not only for individuals but for neighborhoods and municipalities as well, since some areas would receive preferential treatment in regards to funding and beautification. Douglas S. Massey and Nancy A. Denton in *American Apartheid* addressed this inequality and how it coincided with methods used to create ghettos and keep minorities in poorer areas. They argued that segregation persisted even after the Fair Housing Act of 1968.¹⁴ These studies focused heavily on race relations, but neglected to mention how people utilized city planning to undermine racism and ease racial tensions. My case study answers some of the questions as to whether or not there was a racial component to the construction of the Lafayette Park and statue and the revitalization of downtown LaGrange. It is unlikely that the park and statue were part of a larger urban renewal plan that did not contain discriminatory policies. In dealing with Southern cities, this thesis addresses this paradigm in order to test whether the same thing historians noted about Chicago holds true to the South. This thesis will also expand upon Orfield's city planning

¹³ James W. Loewen, *Sundown Towns: A Hidden Dimension of American Racism* (New York: New Press, 2005).

¹⁴ Douglas S. Massey and Nancy A. Denton, *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1993).

study to incorporate small towns and determine the similarities and differences in policy making in regards to town size.

Economic revitalization also played a large role in affecting changes to city planning strategies. Scholars studied economic revitalization practices in many cities. In Cleveland, for example, the policies included "job stimulus...housing rehabilitation and construction, fiscal packages...transit improvement...suburban control."¹⁵ As many scholars pointed out, economic and financial interests were instrumental in how economic revitalization strategies unfolded. Many plans included bolstering the of local history through preservation as well. In her book, *Downtown American: A History of the Place and the People Who Made It*, Alison Isenberg discussed how historic preservation was utilized as a marketing strategy for cities in order to encourage growth in the local economy. In the twentieth century, it became one of the most popular urban revitalization strategies.¹⁶ M. Christine Boyer, an urban geographer, said that real estate companies utilized historical preservation to serve their own financial interests. She considered it a phony tactic that commercialized history and preservation to enable developer profits. In contrast, Isenberg argued that most preservationists in the 1970s did not realize historical preservation could be used for economic gain.¹⁷ In fact, she noted the problems encountered by many preservationist planners as they failed to reach people and gain support in the 1960s and 1970s.¹⁸ The problem thus remains of how to understand the motivations behind the preservationist movement. While many studies focused on the creation of infrastructure and culture within cities, very few looked at the ideological background of such movements, and

¹⁵ Kenneth A. Small, "Transportation and Urban Change," in *The New Urban Reality*, edited by Peterson, Paul E, 203 (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1985).

¹⁶ Alison Isenberg, *Downtown American: A History of the Place and the People Who Made It* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 257.

¹⁷ M. Christine Boyer, *The City of Collective Memory: Its Historical Imagery and Architectural Entertainments* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994).

¹⁸ Isenberg, *Downtown American*, 272.

fewer considered the creation of identity. The city of LaGrange problematizes the recorded trend of historical narrative, as the city planners there nurtured preservationist inclinations, using the outcomes to further perpetuate the idea of LaGrange as a city of culture and history. This thesis explores the reasons why people in La Grange decided to attach themselves to a historical figure instead of implementing other more concrete revitalization strategies, complicating our understanding of the roots of preservationist policies.

Efforts to preserve history led to an increase in historic districts within cities, a development which in turn played an important role in shaping modern city planning. Historic districts, which have been the focus of preservationists and town planners, often have been neglected by historians. David Allan Hamer made up for this dearth in his book *History in Urban Places: The Historic Districts in the United States*. Hamer argued that historic districts developed in four stages, which reflected not only the event being epitomized but the events transpiring between their representation and after their creation.¹⁹ Yet, even this research lacked a thorough analysis of the ultimate purpose of historic preservation. This study of LaGrange will fill this gap in the literature by analyzing how historic districts come into being, taking into account the goals the district creators wished to achieve.

The study of cities constitutes a field of its own. Scholars such as Oscar Handlin noted that studying cities offers valuable insight into communities and the world at large, as individuals are deeply connected to their surroundings in the cities (their setting).²⁰ Handlin thus insisted that studying how people interact with their cities is important and that what people decided to build and memorialize from the past provides insight into their own values. Other historians analyzed

¹⁹ D. A. Hamer, *History in Urban Places: The Historic Districts of the United States* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1998).

²⁰ Oscar Handlin "The Modern City as a Field of Study," in *The Historian and the City*, edited by Oscar Handlin and John Burchard, 3 (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1966).

cities as artifacts, examining them just as they would other sources.²¹ Yet some scholars disagreed on the viability of treating cities as 'artifacts.' Some saw the term as unclear, suggesting that as artifacts cities should be regarded in their parts, i.e., studying monuments and then pursuing the understanding of these parts and how they related to society as a whole. Others advocated for an interdisciplinary approach. For instance, Anthony N.B. Garvan viewed cities in more of an anthropological light, or even as sources for cultural history. He argued that the artifacts each society deems important, such as monuments and roads, illuminate much about that culture. Therefore, the attempts of LaGrange to associate itself with Lafayette imply a connection more meaningful than simple historical circumstance.²² The theories behind analyzing cities as "artifacts" have been greatly debated, but rarely have scholars examined them through case studies from the 1970s. This thesis will seek to define the relationship between LaGrange and the people of the city itself in order to determine how the statue that came to define this city embodies the mentalities of its citizens in this understudied period of time.

The use of city space for historical preservation has also been tied to memorialization movements. David W. Blight in particular looked at memorialization in a study dealing with Civil War veterans and their attempts to immortalize their actions in the war and craft a historical memory and identity.²³ The burst of Civil War memorialization in the 1870s paralleled events in LaGrange during the 1970s. Blight's work follows a similar trajectory as the case study of LaGrange: he studied the 50th anniversary of the Civil War while this thesis examines the bicentennial of the American Revolutionary War. Rather than concentrating on soldiers or those

²¹ Sir John Summerson "Urban Forms," in *The Historian and the City*, edited by Oscar Handlin and John Burchard, 165-167 (Cambridge: The MIT Press), 1966.

²² Anthony N. B. Garvan, "Proprietary Philadelphia as Artifact," in *The Historian and the City*, edited by Oscar Handlin, and John Burchard, 177-201 (Cambridge: The MIT Press), 1966.

²³ David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2001).

who participated in the historical event that they sought to memorialize, this thesis focuses instead on policy-makers and on those who pushed for a history outside of their own personal memories. The people of LaGrange honored an event they did not take part in: the Revolutionary War. While the way they identified with a larger ideal and society was similar to what Blight described in his study of Civil War veterans, the direct relationship to history was missing. Blight also observed how the veterans crafted a particular type of memory regarding the Civil War. He suggested they needed to create a more positive memory of the war in order to overcome the social and economic stresses they faced in their lives. This thesis makes a similar argument, arguing that the reasons why people not involved in a particular historical event sought to identify with that event in order to remove other chapters of their past. Historian Daniel Bluestone, in *Buildings, Landscapes, and Memory*, studied the preservation and historical commemoration resulting from Lafayette's triumphal tour of the United States, connecting place and local heritage to the preservation movement of the twentieth century.²⁴ This case study of LaGrange demonstrates that the assembling of historical memory and the self-identification with the American Revolution, its heroes, and its ideology were crucial in the construction of Lafayette Park, and that this publicly-created ideology and the building of the Lafayette statue served as a means to counter or obscure the economic and social problems of the 1970s.

Sources

City ordinances and correspondences regarding the creation of Lafayette Park and the acquisition of the Lafayette statue have been preserved in the Troup County Archives housed in LaGrange and provided the core materials for this study. Newspaper articles from the *LaGrange Daily News*, a paper which dedicated much of space throughout the 1970s to the acquisition,

²⁴ Daniel Bluestone, *Buildings, Landscapes, and Memory: Case Studies in Historic Preservation* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2011).

anticipation, and arrival of the Lafayette statue, have also proven useful in reconstructing this history. In addition, city ordinances discussing the position of the mayor and town council regarding the creation of the Lafayette Park, where the statue was placed provided insight into the local reasoning behind city beautification after economic downturn. Newspaper articles discussing the push to create historical sites and districts in order to increase tourism to the area, bolster the economy, and praise the efforts to celebrate the bicentennial of the American Revolution illuminated what the local media proposed to the public and what the major agents behind the movement believed about their actions. Indeed, these sources shed light on the mentalities of the people championing a new identity connected to history. The 'Lafayette Collection' and the 'Dr. Waights G. Henry Collection' at the LaGrange College Archives, which include the personal correspondence between Henry and other planners as they attempted to acquire the statue and plan the bicentennial celebrations, also helped to understand the complicated movement that led LaGrange to create an identity around its own history.

Method and Theory

The case of LaGrange illuminates the push for a new identity among small American cities and how a historical city space was created to construct an identity appealing to the citizens of those towns. The erection of the Lafayette statue was the culmination of how people in LaGrange chose to represent themselves and their history. They chose a fanciful history to suit their needs of envisioning a better city. The creation of this history served as a means to display the preferred cultural identity of LaGrange at a time when economic rigors and racial inequality still harassed the United States. The erection of the statue and surrounding events served as a window into how certain members of LaGrange society wished to be perceived and how they implemented their own desires to better the town using the connective tissue of shared history

and classically refined culture. The mentality of the LaGrange people reflected that of the larger United States population, prompting them to utilize culture as a means to spread their ideals. They sought to define themselves through cultural engagement and a constructed past. This thesis serves as a complex cultural history of how people thought and how key figures stimulated local culture to engage in a national movement in lieu of their own failing culture and economic and social downturn. Their disillusionment with society, including the political, economic, and social spheres, prompted their construction of a statue exemplifying not only a new local history but a new national history as well.

Another This study follows D. A. Hamer's four stages of history represented by the evolution of city historic districts. According to this model, evolution must be traced from the beginning of the creation process until after the district or area's creation. This thesis thus includes the history being memorialized, why the area is considered historic, who judged that history to be important, and the history surrounding the statue and park once they were established. The project to create a Lafayette Square was conceptualized during initial planning. City ordinances and town hall meeting notes revealed the main agents involved in this initial process and those agents responsible for the acquisition of the statue itself. These sources also shed light on what these people thought about their plans to create a historical identity for LaGrange and how they disseminated their plans to groups that might fund them and to the public in general.

Finally The thesis also utilizes Oscar Handlin's approach when studying the construction of the Lafayette statue. His approach suggests that what people thought was important can be determined by which artifacts they choose to keep from the past. However, this study diverges from his approach in that it does not simply study the statue as an artifact. The statue serves here as a window into the minds of those who acquired it in the hopes to revive Lafayette as a symbol

for LaGrange, and the United States at large. Geographers such as Owen J. Dwyer and Derek H. Alderman have noted that such memorial landscapes allowed for the identification of major contextual clues, such as the intent of creators, viewing these landscapes as texts that can be interpreted based on their authors and on those who then interact with these spaces, or readers. Part of this thesis is devoted to explaining how history is utilized as a strategy for creating an identity. Another part of this study explains how the citizens of LaGrange accepted and perpetuated this historical identity, and how this acceptance was reflected in the movement to create historical districts and celebrate local culture in congruence with the national bicentennial. Another historian, Ryan Poll, argued that often small towns played up their connections to history in a way that would be aligned with "American Exceptionalism." Building on this argument, this thesis analyzes the participation of the town to better understand how the people of LaGrange saw themselves in the larger context of their country. The goal of the thesis is then to determine what the major planners in LaGrange thought of their actions involving the creation of the Lafayette Park and statue so to establish the mentalities of the people pushing for a new identity connected to history. By looking at the main forces in the acquisition of the Lafayette statue and in the planning of the bicentennial committee, this thesis ultimately unveils how people shape their own identity through the creation of a relationship with their past, and how this in turn influences what they think and do at a specific moment in time.

Outline of Chapters

This thesis consists of four chapters. All of these revolve around the problem of how LaGrange created its own identity. Chapter One discusses the events taking place in both the United States and LaGrange in the 1970s, and how LaGrange fit into the mold of bicentennial fervor of the time. It also describes the events taking place in LaGrange, such as the creation of

the Lafayette Park and the acquisition, construction, and use of the Lafayette statue. This chapter addresses the major players in the town (i.e., the Callaway Foundation, the LaGrange city council, and Dr. Henry G. Waights), who facilitated the push for a town identity based on an American Revolutionary hero. The second chapter pertains to the historical and geographic theories behind created historical spaces and how they hid racial strife in the community by advocating a white dominated society and history. Chapter Three examines the issues of tourism and economic redevelopment and how these served as means to aid small towns during the 1970s economic downturn. It includes the potential reasons behind the movement to create a historical identity and how LaGrange exemplified this movement. The fourth chapter explains how and why people enact cultural revitalization and historic preservation projects, providing both their expressed and their unexpressed reasons. This chapter determines how race affected the way major city agents outlined and performed the identity they wanted their city to embody. Altogether, this study examines how cities utilize historical events and connections to craft what town elites believe is the ideal identity.

¹ Charles Giles Unger, *Lafayette* (New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 2002): 59.

² Unger, *Lafayette*, 156-157.

³ *Ibid.*, 202-213.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 214.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 238.

Chapter 1: Celebrating History in LaGrange

The path to a historical tie with French culture was easily laid out for LaGrange. In 1824, President James Monroe (1758-1831) and Congress invited Marie-Joseph Paul Yves Roch Gilbert du Motier de Lafayette, or the Marquis de Lafayette (1757-1834), to visit the United States in celebration of the nation's 50th anniversary. Lafayette was selected due to his status as a hero of the American Revolution. He achieved his fame when he aided the United States in its struggle against Great Britain. He worked closely with General Washington during the war and was even nicknamed "Our Marquis" by American officers.¹ It was his success at the siege and battle of Yorktown that led to the British surrender and the creation of a new United States of America.² Even after he returned to France Lafayette remained a proud supporter of the cause of freedom and democracy he helped implement in the United States. He sought strong diplomatic and economic relations between the newly recognized country and France, acting as ambassador.³ Lafayette also worked to enact revolutionary ideals in his home country, introducing the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen* to the French General Assembly in 1789. This document mirrored many of the sentiments pronounced in the American *Declaration of Independence*, demonstrating his attachment to American values. Lafayette's dedication to the ideals in the document aligned him with the leadership in the United States, yet sparked much controversy in France during the French Revolution.⁴ After the death of his wife and the installment of Napoleon Bonaparte as Emperor, he left public life, spending most of his time as an exile in La Grange, France.⁵ His dream of bringing American liberties to France remained

¹ Harlow Giles Unger, *Lafayette* (New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 2002): 59.

² Unger, *Lafayette*, 156-159.

³ Ibid., 209-215.

⁴ Ibid., 234.

⁵ Ibid., 339.

unrealized. Following his self-exclusion after finding no solace in his hopes for French progression, he gladly accepted President Monroe's offer to visit the United States.⁶

Lafayette began his tour officially in New York on August 15, 1824. Initially he intended to visit only major cities and states, but the territorial growth of the United States since his last visit required stays in many areas. Georgia was chosen as part of the tour route due to the pressure of General George Troup (1780-1856), who sent the Marquis a letter requesting his presence in Savannah. After several letters, his arrival date was set for March 19, 1825.⁷ A map shows Lafayette's travel path through the middle of the state of Georgia, beginning in Savannah and ending in Fort Mitchell, Alabama. Prominent cities along the way included Augusta, Milledgeville, and Cusseta. The LaGrange area was one of the last stops before Lafayette traveled into Alabama (Figure 1).⁸ And while there is no paucity of memorials dedicated to his visits, as seen in Macon, Augusta, and Milledgeville, there remain few records of exact routes and stops utilized by the touring party.⁹ As explained in a later chapter, that mattered little for LaGrange.

Local legends claim that Lafayette passed through present-day LaGrange, then not yet officially incorporated under a town name. While there, he related the geography/landscape of the region to his wife's estate in France – named La Grange. Flattered by this comment, in 1828, the city incorporated itself under this particular name. For decades to come, the city styled itself as a historical area defined by this episode.

In the 1970s, in occasion of the bicentennial celebrations of the American Independence, LaGrange drew once again from this historical past. The city commissioned a statue of the

⁶ Unger, *Lafayette*, 349.

⁷ John H. Goff, "Across Georgia with Lafayette," *The Georgia Review* 17, no. 2 (Summer 1963): 193-194.

⁸ Map of Lafayette's Visit to Georgia, 1825, Georgia, United States, Lafayette Collection, Suber Archives and Special Collections (hereafter cited as Lafayette Collection) n.d.

⁹ Goff, "Across Georgia with Lafayette," 195.

Revolutionary hero Marquis de La Fayette, drawing attention to the town's connection to American idealism and French culture in order to present an identity created around the liberal tenets of the Enlightenment and French Revolution. This chapter examines this moment of commemoration to demonstrate that town officials built an identity based around a revolutionary hero to boost the economy and to conceal any traces of an unhappy/uncomfortable local history by firmly attaching the town to a national history instead of a strictly southern one.

According to the 2013 census, LaGrange is populated by about 30,000 people. Located about sixty miles south of Atlanta, Georgia, it is regarded as the home to a wealth of history and culture.¹⁰ Indeed, since its incorporation in 1828, the city flaunted its connections to larger cultures and ideas, priding itself on a thriving textile economy. LaGrange is also home to the first private school in the state, LaGrange College, a fact that would deeply affect the history of the town after its construction in 1831.

Throughout the twentieth century, a time when all of Georgia experienced economic downturn, LaGrange too experienced difficulties. Prices dropped and the productivity of mills decreased.¹¹ Unemployment rates rose, and many cities, particularly the more rural areas, sought for a way to soothe the new economic burdens placed on their citizens. All of these factors weighed on the minds of prominent citizens in LaGrange, who took the notion of celebrating the nation's history to heart as a way to tackle these problems.

The idea was to combine economic policymaking with cultural uplift by enhancing the town's look and historical connections. Attempts to beautify the town began as early as 1942,

¹⁰ United States Census Bureau, 2013; "The Importance of Tourism on the Economy," *Market Georgia*, accessed January 12, 2014, <http://www.marketgeorgia.org/article/tourism-impact>.

¹¹ For more information on the decline of mills in the South see Toby Moore, "Dismantling the South's Cotton Mill Village System," in *The Second Wave: Southern Industrialization from the 1940s to the 1970s*, edited by Philip Scranton, 114-145 (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2001).

when the city council resolved to dedicate a portion of the city square as land for a public park.¹² However, the town was unable to provide construction time or funding. World War II halted much of the original planning. Financial limitations during this time caused a halt in the cultivation of public cultural property. In 1948, however, the city was able to secure funding through the Fuller E. Callaway Foundation, an influential group in the Troup County area.¹³ Founded in 1917 by Fuller E. Callaway, the organization invested in the community, donating money for local projects such as libraries, schools, and hospitals to benefit people working in the mills.¹⁴ The foundation also made considerable contributions to local projects beautifying the town, such as Lafayette Park. The city council thus made preparations to build the new property. These plans included an electric fountain "equal in size, equipment and beauty [sic] to that in Hurt Memorial Park in Atlanta, Georgia."

Eight years later, in 1956, the *LaGrange Daily News* highlighted the success of the newly built LaGrange Park and its fountain. This article defined the public interaction with the landmark, quoting a retired textile worker, George W. Prescott, who provided maintenance to the fountain. He claimed that both locals and tourists threw coins into the fountain while "making a wish" as they would in Rome's Fontana di Trevi.¹⁵ The article itself claimed that the fountain attracted many tourists and provided visitors and locals alike with an "outdoor show of intricate water designs against a background of rainbow-hued lighting."¹⁶ The newspaper spoke fondly of the fountain, taking pride in its ability to engage visitors and local citizens. The newspaper

¹² Mayor and Council Meeting Minutes, 1942.

¹³ Mayor and Council Meeting Minutes, 1948.

¹⁴ "History and Heritage," *Callaway Foundation*, accessed March 20, 2015, <http://www.callawayfoundation.org/history.php>.

¹⁵ John Pinto, "The Trevi Fountain and its Place in the Urban Development of Rome," *AA Files*, no. 8 (January 1985): 8-20; *La Dolce Vita*, directed by Federico Fellini (1961; Italy: Riana Film, 2014) DVD. The film used the fountain to redefine Rome as a site of glamour in the post war period against the background of an uncomfortable Italian past identified with fascism.

¹⁶ "Court Square Fountain Begins Its Eighth Year," *LaGrange Daily News*, July 10, 1956.

wished to impress upon people the importance of local architecture and monuments, thus setting the scene for supporting further efforts to beautify the town.

The attempts to create a more refined LaGrange found an outlet in the 1960s when the United States government established a federal commission for planning celebrations of the bicentennial of the country's founding. LaGrange was one of the small local governments to create its own commission. The city council intended to run numerous events, culminating in the erection of the Marquis de Lafayette statue in Lafayette Park. This board would also oversee preparations of many celebratory acts such as the school marching band uniforms.

The local commission began its work by building on existing beautification projects and by ensuring that LaGrange would remain the main beneficiary of all ongoing efforts. In 1962, the city began a beautification project on the land surrounding a statue of a Confederate soldier. The council also decided to move the Confederate monument already on the square to "a suitable location." The new public park was to be dedicated "To the Builders of LaGrange and Troup County," suggesting that the city planners intended to honor the town's history. The United Daughters of Confederacy erected the statue in 1902. Originally they placed it in the southeast corner of the courthouse grounds, facing south and Main Street, so that it would be the first thing that visitors saw upon entering LaGrange.¹⁷ The monument was moved three times before being placed at its current location away from the downtown square. This was a deliberate attempt to change the town's past and rewrite its history to be defined no longer by its Confederate past, but seeking an alternative chronology that bypasses the civil war (with all of its contentious character and implications). This statue would later be moved to a new location, no longer in the downtown square. This project was initiated by a local garden club and the LaGrange

¹⁷ Johnson, F. C., County Historian, Troup County, Georgia, interview by author, Troup County Archives, March 13, 2015.

Bicentennial Commission. The president of LaGrange College was also a major agent in these developments.

Much emphasis was placed on making sure that the city would establish its own reputation as a historic site.¹⁸ According to correspondence between Dr. Waights G. Henry, Chairman of the LaGrange Bicentennial Commission, and Frank Hall of the Troup County Coalition, other neighboring counties wished to engage LaGrange in inter-county celebrations. According to Henry, LaGrange Mayor J. Gardner Newman appointed the commission members and intentionally selected only LaGrange citizens. He explained that the LaGrange Bicentennial Commission intended to host its own events and would not credit any other organization for any assistance given. In Henry's eyes, "it is anticipated that individual communities would make their own plans in reference to the celebration of the 200th anniversary of our nation" and therefore it was unnecessary for other cities and towns to co-host events with LaGrange. His position demonstrates how he wished to garner attention for his town. He listed the various events the town of LaGrange hosted and ended his letter by saying that while local clubs may assist in these events, the bicentennial commission would not be crediting local groups. Hopefully, he said, "all of them will catch the spirit and in some way celebrate our national Independence."¹⁹ All of this suggests that Henry wished for LaGrange to have a special place in regards to the Lafayette celebrations, as its culture and history superseded that of other towns. Also, Henry sought to assuage his own personal passion – if not his obsession – with Lafayette, whom he considered a personal hero.

In 1973, Dr. Henry expressed his ideas about the future of his city to a *LaGrange Daily News* staff writer, Jean Lowry, expressing his enduring adoration for Lafayette. He hoped, "it

¹⁸ "Beautification Planned," *LaGrange Daily News*, 1962, p.1.

¹⁹ Waights G. Henry to Frank Hall Jr., 9 October 1974, Lafayette Collection.

might be possible to someday have in LaGrange a copy of a famous statue of this man Lafayette.” The author of this article wrote two stories involving Henry and his research into Lafayette. Both provide evidence of the college president’s obsession with the man he called “hero.” His reading of the town’s past also reflected the deliberate omission of the negative chapters of the town’s history – for example, its long reliance on slavery for its economic success. In Henry’s mind, the Revolutionary hero was important to the attainment of America’s freedom. Yet this was freedom from Great Britain, not necessarily freedom for people from all forms of oppression.²⁰ Lowry quoted Henry as relating that Lafayette “was interested in the freedom of the common man” and therefore was “an American at heart.” He was therefore impressed by how the Frenchman had been mysteriously able to channel this freedom, a truly American ideal.²¹ Henry soon became the driving force behind the bicentennial celebrations. His veneration of Lafayette soon led to the requisition of the statue he so desired. These acts were used as a way to craft an image of a better present and future by collaborating with past events.

Henry’s own experience played an important role in shaping his efforts to redefine Lagrange and its past. Born in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, Henry had an eclectic array of interests before becoming the president of LaGrange College. He attended Yale University, graduating with a degree of Master of Divinity. He then earned his Doctor of Divinity degree from Birmingham-Southern College. He also served as a Methodist minister for three pulpit charges before being appointed to the Board of Education of the North Georgia Conference as the executive secretary.²²

²⁰ “A Hero and a Dream,” *LaGrange Daily News*, 1973.

²¹ “Lafayette: Frenchman with American Heart...” *LaGrange Daily News*, 26 Feb. 1973.

²² “Flag from LaFayette’s Tomb to be Given to LaGrange College,” *Ledger-Enquirer East Alabama*, May 31-June 1, 1972.

Long before the bicentennial, Henry had established himself as a collector of historical items beginning the Lafayette Collection at LaGrange College. Initially he began by searching for a contact that would enable him to learn more about Lafayette. When he expressed this desire to Dr. Georges de Boné, the Head of the Modern Language Department at LaGrange College, he was able to do just that. It was through de Boné that he met Dr. Leland Case, former city editor of the *Paris Edition of the Herald Tribune*. Case was a friend of two members of the Lafayette family in France – Louis de Lasteyrie and René de Chambrun. This connection initiated a correspondence between Henry and Chambrun, who invited the college president to visit France for an annual ceremony at Lafayette's grave on July 4, 1972. The elaborate ceremony, beginning in France in 1836, called for the exchanging of the American flag flown over Lafayette's tomb each year. In the 1972 ceremony the retired flag was given to Henry to take back to LaGrange College.

It was also during this time that Henry made the acquaintance, through Case, of Mayor Celestin Quincieu of LePuy, in France, to whom he asked permission to copy the town's Lafayette statue.²³ Originally, Burnett Anderson, the Minister for Information at the United States Embassy in Paris, informed Henry that it might take as long as twenty years to acquire permission from the French government to replicate a famous statue of Lafayette, such as the equestrian statue that sat in front of the Louvre. It was at this point that Henry suggested a statue in LePuy, assuming it was less well-known and therefore easier to replicate. He then contacted the Mayor of the town, Celestin Quincieu, and asked him to present the replication case to LePuy's city council. Once Henry acquired the right to replicate the statue, Case suggested an American sculptor of note, Harry Jackson, to produce the replica. Jackson then proceeded to

²³ M.M. Barr Koon, Ed., "Lafayette Goes to LaGrange, (Georgia)," *Gazette of the American Friends of Lafayette*, no. 42 (Easton: Lafayette College, 1976): 3-4.

bring his crew to LePuy to make a cast of the original. Jackson used this cast to create the statue for LaGrange.²⁴

It was also through Leland Case that Henry was able to add a bust of Lafayette to the growing collection at the LaGrange College, one that Henry saw as a corollary to the acquisition of the Lafayette statue. In a letter to Andrew Sparks, Henry recollected the story of the bust's journey. The life-sized bisque bust, cast by the Vincennes-Sevre Royal Pottery Works, was one of five commissioned in 1790. Originally the bust was found by Case at the MacManus Company, a rare book dealer based in Philadelphia. Case informed Henry that the item was there and could possibly be purchased for LaGrange College as the company dealt in rare books, not pieces of art. They negotiated a price and Henry traveled to bring the item back to the college archives. He hoped that eventually the newly acquired bust would be placed in the Lafayette Collection Room in the proposed new art building at the college.²⁵

Henry was not the only person attempting to craft a new image for LaGrange at the time. Georgia Senators Herman Talmadge and Sam Nunn, along with state representative John J. Flynt Jr. and Jack Brinkley, also assisted in acquiring items related to LaGrange's attempts to memorialize Lafayette. Together they asked the Postmaster General, Elmer T. Klassen, to issue a new commemorative stamp of Lafayette on behalf of LaGrange College. In their letter they not only argued for the greatness of Lafayette but they also championed the cause of LaGrange in celebrating his memory, saying that the request of the town to have the stamp feature their statue deserved "fullest consideration."²⁶ The media of LaGrange also helped publicize the events surrounding the bicentennial by emphasizing their economic aspects, a strategy to entice the

²⁴ Waights G. Henry, "The Statue of Gilbert Motier Marquis de Lafayette: Major General on the Staff of General George Washington, 1777-1781," n.d., 2-3.

²⁵ Waights G. Henry to Andrew Sparks, 6 September 1974, Lafayette Collection.

²⁶ Herman Talmadge, Sam Nunn, John J. Flynt Jr., and Jack Brinkley to Elmer T. Klassen, 18 September, 1974, Lafayette Collection.

citizens into supporting the Lafayette connection to La Grange's history. An article in the *LaGrange Daily News* informed citizens that historic preservation plans enacted all over the country were bolstering economies. This same article encouraged interested citizens to look into history in order to induce similar effects in the local economy.²⁷ Likely this article was an attempt to accrue the support of citizens by presenting the positive effects of historic preservation. Henry agreed that such plans would be beneficial to the town, believing the statue of Lafayette would positively affect the economy of LaGrange. The town began making plans to celebrate its history by changing the name of the Square Park as well as by bringing in a replica statue of Lafayette. Henry referred to the statue as being both "a cultural influence as well as an economic asset." He believed that the park and statue would add to the beauty of LaGrange, potentially making it a more appealing destination for tourists. His words were also meant to win over the public so that they would support the changes to the town and celebrate the bicentennial.

If the early period of the bicentennial planning merely involved media fervor for the historical and cultural preservation yet to come, the LaGrange Bicentennial Commission would soon move on to more concrete ways to achieve support and enthusiasm from the local community. The city bicentennial committee made plans to order French-themed high school band uniforms and a bicentennial coin with an image of the statue on its face. The principal of the school was charged with ensuring that educational programs were designed to accompany bicentennial events.²⁸ Again, the media played an important role in publicizing the new plans. An article on the band uniforms entitled, "Most Colorful Thing Around: LaGrange High Band," illustrates how the newspaper tried to capture the celebratory nature of the bicentennial times. They played upon the visual nature of the uniforms themselves as being important, bringing

²⁷ "Landmarks to be Saved," *LaGrange Daily News*, 16 Nov. 1973, 10.

²⁸ Waights G. Henry to Frank Hall Jr., 9 October 1974. Lafayette Collection.

French culture to LaGrange and hopefully encouraging public acceptance during the band's performances. The uniforms were paid for through the Fuller E. Calloway Foundation, costing \$22,000. As seen in Figure 2, the band uniforms were meant to emulate Lafayette's army, having the traditional blue coats with gold outlines. The image shows two band members and a majorette wearing their new outfits and holding their instruments. Set in a brightly lit outside area, they are posing for a picture to be published in the *LaGrange Daily News*. According to the band director of the time, John Thompson, the "Uniforms resemble the officer of the day of the Lafayette Army, being as close as possible to a Lafayette uniform."²⁹ The uniform donned by General Lafayette in the Americas was blue, white, and gold.³⁰ These uniforms would be worn when the high school band played at special bicentennial functions.

While preparations for the Lafayette statue were being made, the LaGrange Bicentennial Commission funded and assisted many other Lafayette-related projects. In anticipation of the official dedication of the statue, planned for February 21, 1976, the group hosted educational programs meant to teach local students about Lafayette. This effort was led by L.L. Banks, Principal of the East Depot Grammar School. These educational programs were complemented by the participation of LaGrange College and LaGrange public schools in various plays, discussions, seminars, studies, and art exhibits. They also attempted to bring in the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra to play French and American music of the Revolutionary period. The commission also voted to enlist the assistance of the First Georgia Mint in order to produce gold, silver, and copper medals emblazoned with the image of the future statue. These were to be sold

²⁹ "Most Colorful Thing Around: LaGrange High Band," *LaGrange Daily News*, December, 1975.

³⁰ Unger, *Lafayette*, 109.

in the Citizens and Southern Bank of West Georgia, the future temporary home of the statue itself.³¹

Of all the planned events and memorialization for the bicentennial celebration, the creation of the Lafayette statue served as the climax of the festivities. The Lafayette statue was presented to the public (though it would be officially proposed at a city council meeting at a later date) on April 19, 1974. The article attempts to display its connection to Lafayette and local history, potentially swaying the public's opinion to understand this as a landmark event displaying the importance of freedom and historical identity. In addition, the article contained an artist's rendering of the suggested fountain and statue. In this depiction (Figure 3) Lafayette was to hold a "red, white, and blue rosette which was the symbol of liberty."³² The rosette itself had a long history, being a patriotic article of clothing adornment during eighteenth century France and being particularly relevant during the French Revolution, symbolizing France united under the new Republican ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity.³³ Again the link was drawn between the American Revolution and the French Revolution, particularly in regards to ideology. These colors are significant because of their connection to both France and the United States, suggesting that they are one in the same, and that there is a brotherhood between each country's quests for freedom through revolution. The image is a triumphant one, with the Lafayette statue wearing a military uniform and holding the rosette high above his head. Certainly this was an attempt to connect to his successful military career in the American Revolution, as red, white, and blue are not only the colors of the French flag but also of the American one.

³¹ Waights G. Henry to Frank Hall Jr., 9 October 1974. Lafayette Collection. It is unclear based on sources and lists of the events whether or not they were able to recruit the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra in their bicentennial celebrations. However, they were able to recruit other bands for the 'We Love America' Parade on April 17, 1976, mentioned in Appendix A. The LaGrange High School Band, wearing their new French-inspired uniforms, also performed at several bicentennial events.

³² "Proposed for Square: City to get LaFayette Statue," *LaGrange Daily News*, April 19, 1974, 1.

³³ Kristin Lee, "Fashioning the Self: The Symbolic Nature of Dress in Eighteenth-Century Dress," (presentation, California State University, 2012), 5.

The location of Lafayette in the center of the town square also indicates the importance of the hero to the town. Centrality plays an important role in statue placement, drawing the eye and being visible from all sections of the square itself. Lafayette is also raised on a pedestal in the center of a fountain. The pedestal sits upon a layered dais that is rising before finally reaching the topmost layer where the statue resides. Lafayette's raised status implies that the struggle for freedom and equality is steep, but one that can be successful. The fountain is important as it was added to the town square earlier, providing an ambience connected to nature and local history. This choice highlighted the local natural beauty of the town, relating back to the legend that the LaGrange area appeared similar to France. The water encircles the elevated statue, seeming to provide more evidence that the town wished to honor Lafayette and his achievements and high status.

LaGrange was able to utilize the connection to Lafayette to turn celebrations into a grandiose expression of a new United States, one that evoked the idealism of the past. Not only did they tie themselves to the notions expressed in the *Declaration of Independence*, but they also associated themselves with French culture, and more specifically with French enlightenment values. Town planners, such as Henry and the Bicentennial Commission, took French sculpture, ideology, and France's presumed preeminence in the cultural realm and attempted to apply it to themselves and their town, suggesting they too were – in a way – a part of French culture and the refinement it implied. LaGrange collected French flags and dressed in French uniforms in order to embody what they perceived as French. The town appeared as though it held the same standards of those with the ideologies expressed in earlier documents. Yet all of their actions were unable to counter the issues of their era, despite attempts to obscure the vast problems going on socially, economically, and politically.

Georgia at this time was not bereft of social issues, particularly in regards to race. The same article describing the arrival of the Lafayette statue in LaGrange hinted at the racial struggle occurring alongside the bicentennial celebrations. The author described the town's city employees eating their lunch outside the warehouse: They were joking and "ignoring their distinguished visitor." According to the newspaper, this treatment seemed "slight for a general who had helped the United States through an important war." The author of the article continued by saying that "The important people in town knew he was there," implying that African Americans could not appreciate culture or history and were unimportant.³⁴ This article provides a glimpse of a common white sentiment at that time, and shows how the media reinforced these ideas for its white readership. The involvement of racial sentiments in the crafting of the history and future hopes for LaGrange will be discussed in more depth in another chapter of this thesis. For the moment, it is important to note how in a letter to the editor of the *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, Andrew Sparks, Henry mentions his extreme liking of the article, ignoring its racial undertones. His omission suggests that he either agreed with the sentiment or was determined to ignore it for the sake of self-aggrandizement and advertisement for his town events.³⁵

Henry was not alone in glossing over racial inequality in LaGrange. The involvement of the community in regards to racial issues is demonstrated by how town officials treated their own racialized past. This fact is aptly illustrated by their decision to move the previously mentioned Confederate memorial statue to a more secluded area of town. Originally the memorial, a depiction of a Confederate soldier holding a rifle, resided adjacent to the Troup County Courthouse, right next to the town square (Figure 4). The statue was meant to commemorate the soldiers who died in the Civil War. The local Ivy Garden Club requested that the statue be

³⁴ "A Georgia Town Gets Ready to Welcome Its Hero: Lafayette Comes Home to LaGrange," *The Atlanta Journal and Constitution Magazine*, 25 August, 1974, 19.

³⁵ Waights G. Henry to Andrew Sparks, 6 September 1974, Lafayette Collection.

relocated to a triangular area across from the city cemetery, an area the president of the club promised to preserve.³⁶ This move indicates that LaGrange tried to create a new identity while still maintaining its old history. City planners did not destroy the old identity, but they did move it aside in order to make way for the one identity. The newspaper simultaneously put the movement of the Confederate Statue in the public eye as the town planners intended to move the statue to a less prominent location. Yet the move is significant because it occurred right after the installation of the Lafayette statue, a symbol of the crafted past of LaGrange.

Most other LaGrange media coverage did not mention ongoing racial tensions. Instead local newspapers focused with exuberance on the positive reception to the statue. Once the statue had arrived in the city, it was to be held in the Citizens and Southern Bank on Main Street for six weeks until the town square renovations were complete. Henry was photographed with the statue once it arrived, as seen in Figure 5. Town photos depicted men struggling to carry the statue to the bank (the weight was estimated at around 1,800 pounds). Figure 6 shows the statue being displayed to the LaGrange public for the first time, with Henry standing near the statue with a crowd of onlookers. After the unveiling, Henry urged citizens to "Come up and touch him because the only thing that will touch him after he is on that pedestal will be the pigeons."³⁷ Henry wanted to involve the entire town in the celebrations, likely hoping to contribute to the creation of an identity for everyone willing to participate. In fact, Henry's insistence on immersing town members in a shared sensory experience was meant to create a unified community based upon a historical identity.

It was at this time that the city council agreed that the statue, crafted by Harry Jackson and originally purchased by the LaGrange College, would be on permanent loan to the city of

³⁶ "Confederate Statue Here to be Relocated," *LaGrange Daily News*, 7 July, 1976, 1.

³⁷ "Lafayette: 10-Foot Tall and He's Plenty Heavy," *LaGrange Daily News*, 20 Sept, 1974, 7.

LaGrange. The renaming of Court Square to Lafayette Square and the maintenance of the statue were both terms in the leasing agreement.³⁸ The city later officiated the square name change on October 8, 1974, a month after the signing of the lease agreement.³⁹

The city finally relocated the statue to its new pedestal on New Year's Day, 1975. The journey of Lafayette to its permanent destination was a highly publicized event. Workmen from the Traylor Construction Company assisted in this move. A *LaGrange Daily News* article stated that "Onlookers slowed their cars as they passed the statue." Several images were published of people carrying the statue to its new location above the court square fountain, with onlookers overseeing the occasion. Figure 7 shows both workers and spectators. Hoisting the statue on its final resting place required more than just manpower. As the statue weighed approximately one thousand pounds, workers necessitated the assistance of ropes and a crane, as seen in Figure 8.⁴⁰ The newspaper provided full visuals of the event to its readers, again attempting to demonstrate the importance of the new statue to the people of LaGrange. Also, the size of the statue itself, both in height and weight, suggested the significance of Lafayette to LaGrange and its history.

This relocation event would culminate in a commencement of the new addition to the town once both the statue and fountain were fully functional. However, the statue would not be in its final place of prominence until additional work was completed on the fountain, facilitated by funds from the Callaway Foundation. Town officials hoped to have the project completed by February.⁴¹ Other public events followed once the installment of the statue was completed and the fountain began functioning. An official presentation was held on the February 7. At this time the lights were turned on so that those in the city could see the new fountain. Despite that the

³⁸ Mayor and City Council Minutes, 24 September, 1974.

³⁹ Mayor and City Council Minutes, 8 October, 1974.

⁴⁰ "Lafayette Takes Final Step," *LaGrange Daily News*, 2 Jan, 1975.

⁴¹ Ibid.

official dedication would not be until later that month, on February 21, 1975, the event on the seventh was quite grandiose. The LaGrange High School band performed *The Marseillaise* and the *Star-Spangled Banner* in new uniforms fashioned after those worn by the French army. According to the *LaGrange Daily News*, the Executive Director of the Georgia Commission for the National Bicentennial Celebration, A.K. Johnson, also named LaGrange as an official Bicentennial City in 1975.⁴²

As part of its effort to craft a connection to Lafayette and his French heritage, LaGrange appropriated other aspects of French culture. The town adopted a new city emblem, drawing inspiration from the symbol of the thirteen colonies and the Lafayette escutcheon. The emblem, again, interwove both French and American influences. (Figure 9) Dr. Georges de Bone said that “By combining the coat of arms of the Motier de la Fayette family with the easily recognizable emblem of the original 13 states we have achieved a symbolic union.” There is no doubt that people in LaGrange understood the symbolic meaning of their actions. According to the same article, they were not only honoring their own history, but “augmenting Lafayette’s achievement.” This is a lofty assumption considering modern LaGrange citizens never physically interacted with Lafayette.⁴³ Yet, they surely interacted with their own created historical memory of him during their acts of commemoration.

Other French cultural products were used in the bicentennial actions. The mayor of LaGrange, Gardner Newman, was presented with a French flag by Michel Cornier, French Trade Commissioner of Atlanta. As explained in another newspaper article, the reasoning behind the gift was that it matched the French theme of the Affair on the Square art show and Bastille Day

⁴² Waights G. Henry, “LaGrange Celebration” *The Atlanta Journal and Constitution Magazine*, 16 Feb. 1975. There is a dearth of information regarding “bicentennial cities” and how they are chosen, implying that this is likely a formality of the time and not an official indicator of status or Revolutionary War involvement.

⁴³ “City Emblem Adopted for LaGrange by Council,” *LaGrange Daily News*, 8 January, 1975, 2.

celebration.⁴⁴ The Affair on the Square was a sidewalk art show. This art yearly art festival featured multiple themes over the years, but in the mid-1970s the theme was consistently “Bastille Day,” meant to commemorate Bastille Day in France.⁴⁵ Cornier was not the only French visitor brought in by the bicentennial. In fact, Count Rene de Chambrun, the great-great grandson of Lafayette, visited downtown LaGrange and participated in the festivities by placing a wreath at the foot of the new statue (Figure 10). Acting as a stand-in for the Marquis, his descendant expressed his acceptance and approval of the event and its surrounding celebrations. While in residence, he also received an honorary doctorate from LaGrange College and was named an honorary citizen of the city and state.⁴⁶ For many contemporaries, the sum of all of these symbolic acts validated the new historical identity created for LaGrange.

As part of the bicentennial celebrations, the Elms and Roses Garden Club Council of LaGrange organized a tour of historic homes, including Bellevue, a large mansion containing educational exhibits and recently renovated by the Callaway Foundation. The tour included nine stops, the last two of which were exhibits about Lafayette at the college.⁴⁷ The new Lafayette Collection, put together by College President Waights G. Henry and housed at LaGrange College constituted one important stop.⁴⁸ This collection included many artifacts and displayed the years of efforts by Henry to collect all items related to Lafayette, including his bust and an exhibit of artwork depicting important events in the hero’s life. As explored later in this thesis, tours of homes and historic places had become fashionable by this time, particular in the South. The goal

⁴⁴ “French Flag Given City,” *LaGrange Daily News*, 22 July, 1975.

⁴⁵ “La Grange Offers Touch of France,” *The Chattanooga Times*, 3 September, 1978.

⁴⁶ “Grandson at Lafayette Statue,” *LaGrange Daily News*, 17 Jan. 1976.

⁴⁷ Flyer, “Viva LaGrange! A Standard Flower Show and Home and Garden Tour,” 9 April – 10 April 1976, Lafayette Collection.

⁴⁸ “Elms, Roses Tour of Homes To Include Historic Bellevue,” *LaGrange Daily News*, 6 April 1976.

of this tour was to engage the public in the local LaGrange history. It also acted as a way to induce positive sentiments in regards to the acquisition of French and Lafayette artifacts.

In addition, local clubs supported historical identity creation in the town of LaGrange. For instance, the LaGrange Bicentennial Commission sponsored the 'We Love America Day' parade, which was joined by at least twenty-seven other groups or organizations that participated in creating floats.⁴⁹ The fact that so many groups joined demonstrates that many were interested in showing their patriotism and love of their country, and through that, its history.

In conclusion, LaGrange effectively capitalized on its connections to historical figures and events, such as the Marquis de Lafayette and the Revolutionary War with the intent of crafting a new identity, one that would be permeated by American ideals and one that would be economically sound. This identity built upon a feigned past, as LaGrange did not contribute to any of the events it claimed to be involved in throughout its history. Indeed, the ties to France and Lafayette were based on legends and rumors, and later expounded upon by individuals in town, such as Waights G. Henry, who wished to express their own ideas about what a proper American town should look like. The merriment shown by city organizers and the local newspaper differed from the economic and social setting of the 1970s, problematizing the enthusiasm LaGrange showed for looking backwards instead of forwards. Yet, people in LaGrange attempted to intermingle both their past and present in order to craft a better future. Economically, the town sought to build its cultural capital in order to boost tourism and help stimulate the economy after the collapse of the local mill economy. Culture, such as music, French style, and artistic events allowed for the creation of an identity combining LaGrange and Lafayette, hopefully accomplishing the goal of reframing the town as a place of elegance. The lack of acknowledgement of any racial strife in the town led to the crafting of a more "white"

⁴⁹ "'We Love America Day' Parade Slated Saturday," *LaGrange Daily News*, 16 April 1976.

identity anchored to French heritage. In this context, economic concerns, culture, and race all influenced the commemoration and pronouncement of the bicentennial in 1970s LaGrange. In this order, these concerns are treated as the main subjects of the upcoming chapters.



Figure 1 - Map of Lafayette's Visit to Georgia, 1825, Georgia, United States, Lafayette Collection, n.d.

Figure 2 - Lafayette's Visit to Georgia, 1825, Georgia, United States, Lafayette Collection, n.d.

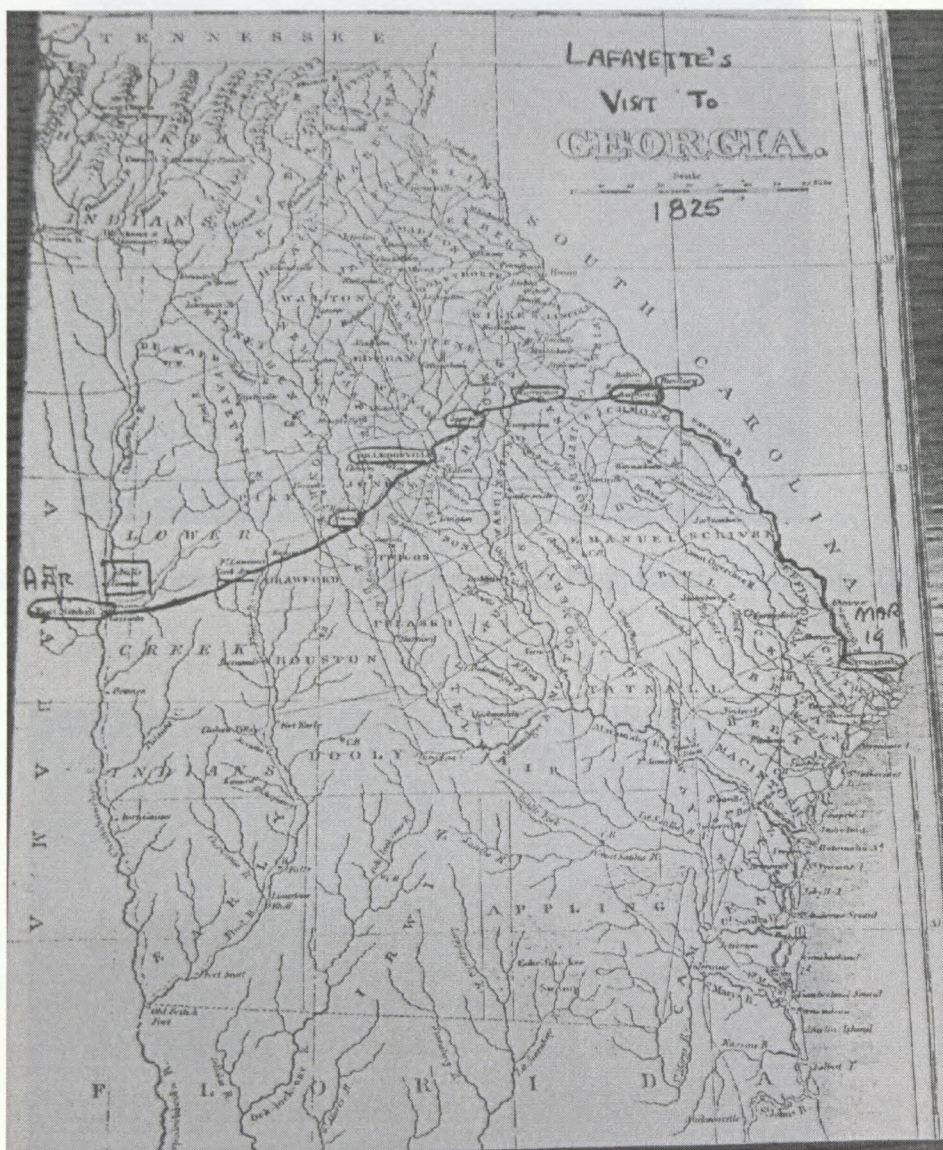


Figure 1 – Map of Lafayette's Visit to Georgia, 1825, Georgia, United States, Lafayette Collection, n.d.

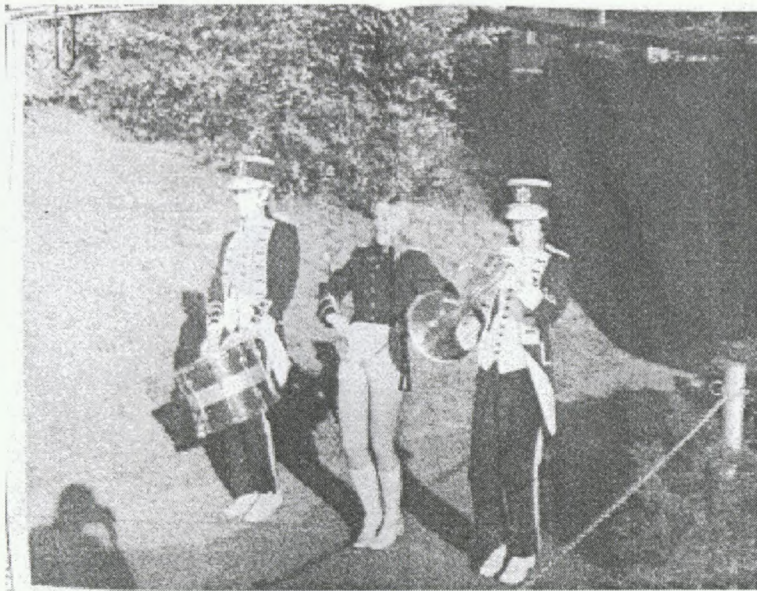


Figure 2 – Most Colorful Thing Around: LaGrange High Band,” *LaGrange Daily News*, December, 1975.

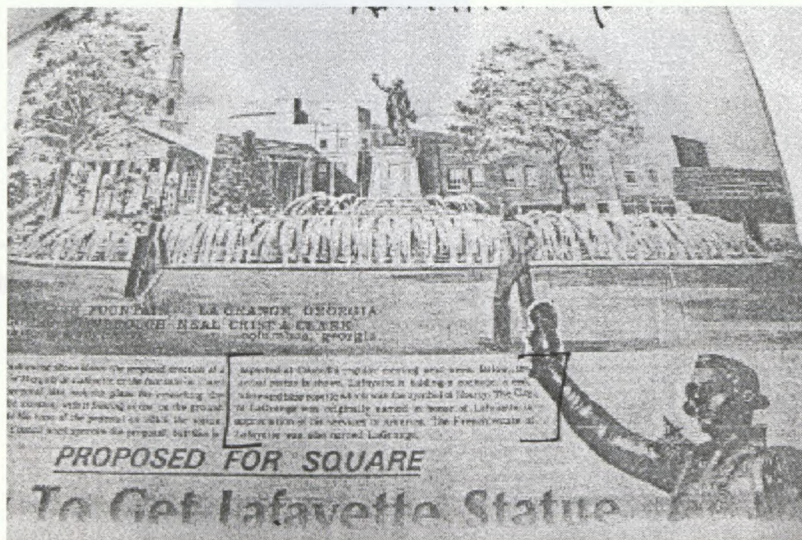


Figure 3 – Proposed for Square: City to get Lafayette Statue,” *LaGrange Daily News*, April 19, 1974, p.1.

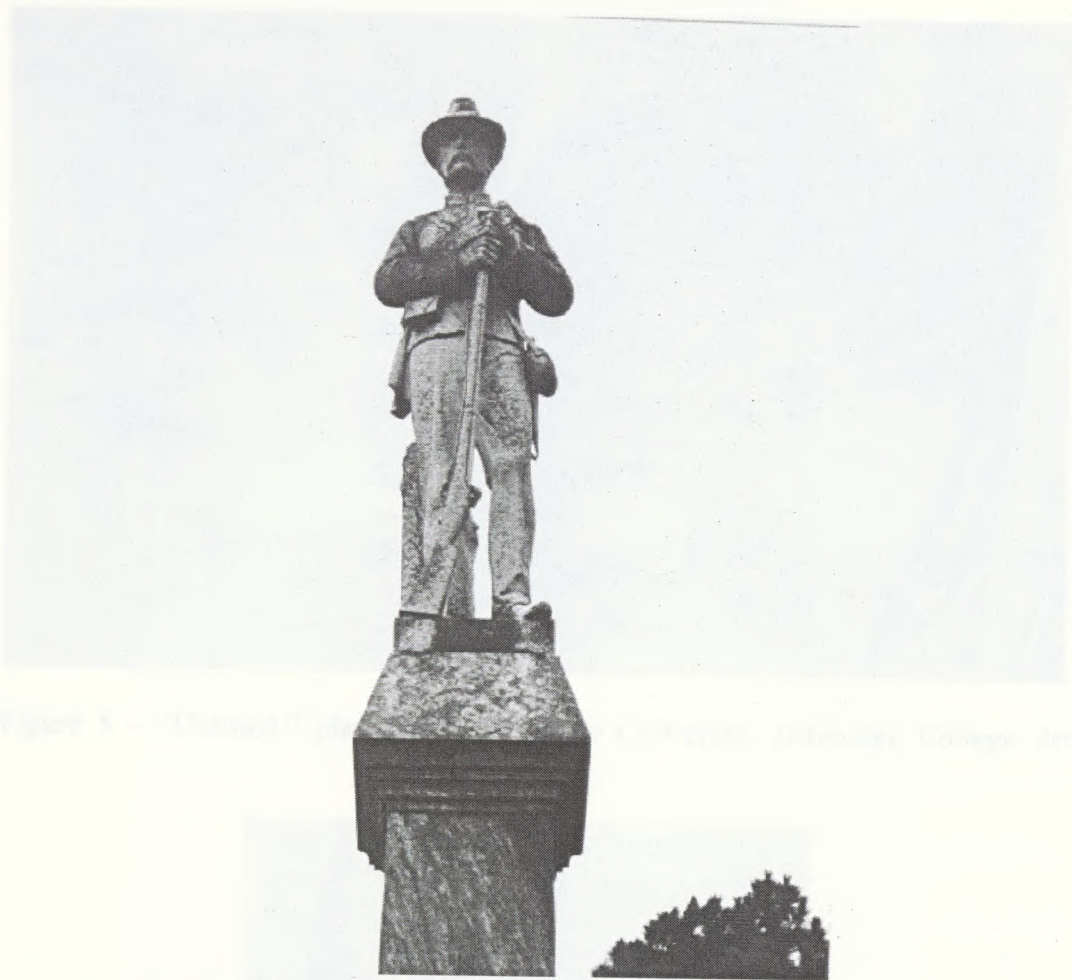


Figure 4 – “Confederate Statue, LaGrange,” photograph, *Troup County Photograph Collection*, August 1993.



Figure 5 – “Untitled,” photograph, *Lafayette Collection, LaGrange College Archives*, 1975.



Figure 6 – “Lafayette: 10-Foot Tall and He’s Plenty Heavy,” *LaGrange Daily News*, 20 Sept, 1974, p.7.

Figure 8 – “Moving Lafayette Statue, East Lafayette Square, CVAM,” photograph, *Troup County Photograph Collection*, December 2001.



Figure 7 – “Lafayette Takes Final Step,” *LaGrange Daily News*, 2 Jan, 1975.



Figure 8 – “Moving Lafayette Statue, East Lafayette Square, CVAM,” photograph, *Troup County Photograph Collection*, December 2001.



Figure 9 – “City Emblem Adopted for LaGrange by Council,” *LaGrange Daily News*, 8 January, 1975, p.2.



Figure 10 – “Unveiling of Lafayette Statue on LaGrange Square,” photograph, *Troup County Photograph Collection*, 1976.

¹ For more information on commemoration for identity-making purposes see Lynette P. Spillman, *Races and Commemoration: Creating National Identities in the United States and Australia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Orville Jones, JoAnne Carlo-Ramsey, *Geography and Memory: Explorations in Identity, Place and Belonging* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

Chapter 2: Theory of Memory and Community in LaGrange

Collective Memory and Place

The commemoration of past events has always been a means by which towns and peoples formed identity and created cultural relevance in cities lacking obvious attachments to historical events.¹ This chapter demonstrates that this process, the ties to history, particularly to the Revolutionary hero Lafayette, were used by LaGrange and its prominent citizens and media to both stimulate local culture and report upon an idealized present and potential future. During the 1970s, the attempts to create a community based on a historical and cultural identity flourished due to the media excitement over the bicentennial. In LaGrange, as elsewhere, the bicentennial served as the perfect venue to build these identities. These efforts culminated in the construction of a public space utilizing history for the intended purpose of having a collective space and memory in which to celebrate the LaGrange community. Yet the history represented by the Lafayette statue, while attempting to emulate a national identity over an entirely southern identity, neglected a difficult past of racial intolerance.

Section One: Geography Theory of Collective Memory and Space

Both geographers and historians studied the attempts to build a collective memory into an urban space. First this thesis will explore a prominent theory utilized by geographers. Owen J. Dwyer and Derek H. Alderman, both cultural geographers, noted that commemoration and the created public spaces often reflected the normative social order. They argued that “memorial landscapes” were understood through three frameworks: the text metaphor, the arena metaphor,

¹ For more information on commemoration for identity-making purposes see Lynette P. Spillman, *Nation and Commemoration: Creating National Identities in the United States and Australia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Owain Jones, Joanne Garde-Hansen, *Geography and Memory: Explorations in Identity, Place and Becoming* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

and the performance metaphor. Geographers utilized these metaphors to interpret landscapes to determine the context surrounding them. Such geographers did this by studying the texts, the arenas of their production, and how they are enacted through performance. The text metaphor includes an analytical "reading" of histories and ideas voiced by the memorials, as well as how memories are placed and replaced into locations. The arena metaphor involves viewing memorials and such as sites in which to enact cultural rituals and performance and other power-laden issues. Finally, the performance metaphor views memorials as places where rituals are enacted to reify the culture not only into the landscape but also onto the body itself.² All of these combine as a post-structural 'reading' of the memorial landscape to ask questions about authorship and citing of culture as places of performance and ritual.

Geographers also often explored memorial landscapes to be viewed as 'texts.' This approach advocates reading monuments like books, determining meaning about the authors and readers, allowing for a better understanding of the context in which the monuments are viewed. Geographers used the text metaphor to determine not only the original meaning behind the creation (or authorship) of a certain landscape, but to also explore how this landscape was propagated and interpreted by subsequent social actors (or readers). In the case of most memorials and landscapes, the original meaning ascribed is not always continued, as meaning and interpretations are created and re-created through a discursive process. This textual approach explains commemoration and how it was used as a process to create "stories" using landscapes.³ Like all texts, memorials are a text written from a particular viewpoint. The history portrayed often remained incomplete, contributing to the marginalization and erasure of the narratives of minorities.

² Owen J. Dwyer and Derek H. Alderman, "Memorial Landscapes: Analytic Questions and Metaphors," *GeoJournal* 78 (2008): 166.

³ Dwyer and Alderman, "Memorial Landscapes," 169.

Beyond reading the 'text' for a clearer understanding of the 'collective memory' of a community, it is important to take into account how and under what circumstances this text is created. According to Dwyer and Alderman, "collective memory is a socio-spatially mediated political process." Thus, recollections of the past are constructs maintained through collective memory and are transmitted and created through cultural practices. Often these objects of commemoration are not truthful to the past. Interpretations of the past are greatly informed by the construction of physical sites of memory, or memorials. These can include street signs, historical markers, landmarks, statuary, and parks. Such memorials serve not only to express versions of history, but to legitimize the versions they portray. Memorials subconsciously affect viewers, influencing how they interpret the past because they are commonly portrayed as impartial in their assessments.⁴ They also influenced local and non-local communities, as many served as sites for tourist destinations, local civic events, and even gathering places for everyday actions. Though many of these memorials and sites of memory are accepted visions of the past for many communities, they must be recognized for the time and place in which they were constructed.

Memorials were not above bias, and cannot be viewed as truthful purveyors of the past. Instead they must be analyzed and not taken at face value. Dwyer and Alderman argued that memorials were influenced greatly by social control, negotiation, and contestation, only representing history in very controlled ways, both hiding and revealing the past. Remembering is not separate from forgetting and memorials allowed those behind their construction to choose what they represented based on their own ideology. The selection of what to celebrate was driven by social and political motivations. The very public nature of memorials meant that through careful selection one cultivated what ideas were important to remember and consider, weeding

⁴ Dwyer and Alderman, "Memorial Landscapes," 167.

out those that were not. The metaphors described by Dwyer and Alderman were designed to illuminate these forgotten histories and ideas. For instance, memorials often represented the current dominant groups, often neglecting minority history, or even subverting it to fit the preferred mainstream narrative. This was often due to fact that those who had power and funds to create costly representations and memorials of the past were often a part of the elite.⁵ These people were then able to control the narrative portrayed, allowing it to suit their own goals. Therefore, memorials cannot be seen as accurate representations of the past, but they do provide a lens with which to view the present. They can be tools that inform researchers about problems of the present, especially during the time of their construction. Nonetheless, they are also in a constant state of flux, having varying degrees of favor and use over time.⁶ Important to this concept of use and representation is the physical place and space that these monuments reside.

Geographers have also contributed to the assessment of monuments by studying placement. Placement alone determines, confirms, and denies power struggles. In this context, place referred to the level of visibility, accessibility, symbolism, and how a monument was established in regards to its surrounding landscapes. Placement also ascribed importance because it allowed for analysis of not only the topic of which past to represent, but where in fact this history should be represented within the cultural landscape of a community.⁷ These geographic views of memorialization allow for the assessment of the Lafayette Statue and Park at the time of its inception and during its use though the bicentennial.

⁵ For more information on the influence of the elite ideology on urban planning and commemoration/community building see Daniel M. Bluestone, *Constructing Chicago* (Yale University Press, 1991).

⁶ Dwyer and Alderman, "Memorial Landscapes," 167-168.

⁷ Ibid., 168.

Section Two: History Theory of Collective Memory and Cities

Historians also studied how space was utilized and informed collective identity. In *Main Street and Empire*, historian Ryan Poll assessed small towns, viewing them as microcosms of the larger United States, in which main street served as a symbol, evoking everyday stories and identity. In his book, Poll began by assessing the importance of the town square, explaining, "The small town is figured as a space of national conversion that transforms foreign subjects and narratives into national subjects and narratives." He applied this same idea to that of Main Street. Poll also argued that the small town acts as an arena in which the United States discursively enacts its identity. For him, this arena is an abstract place, not a specific geographic area. In choosing to analyze the small town as an ideological form, instead of a physical space, Poll was able to highlight a paradigm of American Exceptionalism. Under this paradigm he argued that the "dominant" small town was one that imagined the nation as "an autonomous, contained, and innocent island community." Indeed, according to his argument, the small town allowed the United States to increase worldwide Americanization and globalization.⁸ While Poll's study addressed the significance of Main Street in the twenty-first century, the phenomenon of creating a public space in order to unite local citizens under its ideals began well before then. In fact, his argument that small towns and their Main Streets encouraged large-scale American Exceptionalist sentiment applies not only to globalization, but to smaller scale backing of Exceptionalism that served to obfuscate local tensions and national racism and economic inequity. In fact, many towns suffered through such problems. LaGrange is one such example of a "small town" that created a public space to exemplify American Exceptionalism through a particularly fashioned past that shaded reality.

⁸ Ryan Poll, *Main Street and Empire: The Fictional Small Town in the Age of Globalization* (New Brunswick Rutgers University Press, 2012): 2-3.

John F. McDonald, in his work *Urban America: Growth, Crisis, and Rebirth*, notes that town life was frequently punctuated by crises. He characterizes these events after 1950 into three "acts," with each act defined by different problems. Act one was the time from 1950 to the early 1970s. The second act began in 1970 and went through 1990. The third act covered 1990 through the early 2000s. Up until the early 1970s there was a great deal of growth. Yet a coming crisis was heralded by riots, such as the Watts riots in Los Angeles in 1965. Act two was explained as a time of urban crisis, in which a vicious cycle of declining cities and social problems led to increased discontent within most cities. This discontent stemmed from problems such as segregation, city financial difficulties, inner-city unemployment, welfare dependence, poor educational funding, and crime. McDonald also noted that African Americans were most heavily affected by these problems. It was during this second act that LaGrange strove, using preservation and historical memory, to create a better community environment.⁹ They worked past the struggles as described by act two to create a thriving community, despite the decline in many other urban areas.

Section Three: Historical Theory and Southern Identity

As geographers and historians have discussed the importance of collective memory and physical or conceptual place, the concept of 'southern identity' played a major role in the development of collective memory for historians. Another factor important to reconfiguring the collective memory of LaGrange is southern identity. The concept of 'southern identity' has a long history of individuals defining the South and its identity in different ways. It was often easier to create an identity associated with the faults of a region, at least from the perspective of an outsider. For the South, slavery stood out as one of the most important "faults." Presently, the

⁹ John F. McDonald, *Urban America: Growth, Crisis, and Rebirth* (Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 2009): xv-xvi.

South is increasingly more difficult to establish as a distinct region. This is not due to a lack of perceived faults, however. According to historian C. Vann Woodward, it became more an issue of the faults being less conspicuous, or more common to all areas of the United States.¹⁰ The lack of obvious distinctions is disconcerting to many Southerners, who feel that their heritage and traditions are threatened by conformity. This problem is not new. Already in the 1920s and 1930s, the Agrarians, a group of Southern intellectuals centered near Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee, sought to keep the identity of the South from assimilating into the national identity. They hoped to stave off industrialization, a process they thought would encourage materialism and loss of tradition.¹¹ As the agrarian lifestyle was integral to Southern identity, industrialization was substituted as the new lifestyle. A "hole" thus began to form at the heart of this identity.¹² Yet, many differences came into play regardless of current distinctions from other locations. The impact of the past was critical in forming the South's identity. In fact, the rift between the South and the North, particularly in regards to the Civil War and slavery, created a sentiment of separatism, of distinctness. This allowed the continuation of a distinct identity, regardless of whether or not there were many concrete differences between people and their regions. Yet, instances of celebrating southern history were certainly apparent. Both Atlanta and Savannah championed the "Old South charm" in their construction of arts, theatrical performances, sports, and other cultural events.¹³ LaGrange, instead of encouraging notions of relating to the "Old South," attempted to present a more Americanized identity, one that would go beyond Old South concepts. The importance of created identity, such as in LaGrange, has in turn effected the establishment of the South as a less distinct region.

¹⁰ C. Vann Woodward, "The Search for Southern Identity," *The Burden of Southern History* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2008): 5.

¹¹ Sheldon Hackney, "The South as Counterculture," *The American Scholar* 42, no. 2 (Spring 1973): 25.

¹² Woodward, "The Search for Southern Identity," 8.

¹³ Coleman, *A History of Georgia*, 386-387.

Scholars have long debated whether or not the South is a distinct region. In *Away Down South*, James C. Cobb articulated that the South was almost always defined in direct opposition to "The North." In fact, the North was described as more in line with the traditionally considered American narrative. This northernized American identity included one of a young nation dedicated to the principles of liberty, equality, and democracy, while the Southern identity was often viewed as one built on human bondage. Yet in LaGrange supporters of the actions to cultivate the attachment to Lafayette sought to proclaim that the South was just as related to the idealistic identity often attributed to the North. In fact, during the process of creating local ties to a positive identity, the LaGrange Chamber of Commerce called the town one that represented "Southern hospitality."¹⁴ This demonstrated that LaGrange sought out a dualistic identity that both laid claim to the positive aspects of the South, such as its natural landscapes and hospitality, and the national identity characterized by Lafayette and the American Revolution. The town was able to craft an identity that retained positive meaning while hiding the negative aspects of society, such as the history of slavery and oppression.

The past itself became an impetus for identity affirmation. The South created a mythical past in order to more concretely define the present. The creation of such myths was not uncommon; many groups tended to create local legends on their past, their origins, or their greatness.¹⁵ Yet the South stands out through the harsh criticism many of its created myths received. An example of this criticized past was the idea of slavery as benevolent and helpful to the slave population. While the big part of this identity created around racism and agrarian lifestyles was discredited and no longer suitable material for local legends, the South began

¹⁴ LaGrange Chamber of Commerce, LaGrange in Troup County Georgia: Pretty As a Picture...Plus!, LaGrange, Georgia: LaGrange Chamber of Commerce, circa 1940.

¹⁵ James C. Cobb, *Away Down South: A History of Southern Identity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005): 12.

associating itself with more positive nationwide ideas, such as freedom and the American dream.¹⁶ Woodward argued that the South is a region distinct from the rest of the United States because of its history of failure. He said that American history was a “success story” in which the South did not fit.¹⁷ As a whole the country has never encountered true defeat, yet the South certainly has dealt with loss, both in regards to military defeat and in regards to economic deficiency. Therefore the South often clung to success stories of the entire country, such as the Revolutionary War.¹⁸ This allowed the South to discredit the memory of slavery and encouraged the notion that its history was one of integrity.

Section Four: LaGrange Seen through History and Geography Theories

In LaGrange, those who served as the impetus for choosing Lafayette as a hero to honor held controlled power and identified what was considered worthy of commemoration. It is in this context that this section considers the motivations of the elite who pushed to build the Lafayette Statue and Park. For Dr. Waights Henry, the choice to seek out an attachment to Lafayette seemed in part due to his personal fascination with the Revolutionary hero. Henry stated that his initial interest in Lafayette drew from his connection to both the name of the town and the college.¹⁹ Yet, as Henry continued researching Lafayette, he began to feel more personally connected to the man, believing him to epitomize what it meant to be both a Frenchman and an American. As one of the primary “authors” of the statue and park dedicated to Lafayette, Henry was reinforcing the local myths of the town and attempting to make a romanticized “plot” of Lafayette the dominant narrative of the community, thereby using collective memory as a tool. Thematically, LaGrange newspapers portrayed Lafayette as a man who fought for freedom and

¹⁶ Cobb, *Away Down South*, 13.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 18.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 19.

¹⁹ “A Hero and a Dream,” *LaGrange Daily News*, 1973.

the rights of the common man.²⁰ Therefore, creating a public space dedicated to this hero would mean re-creating LaGrange as a community also adherent to these ideals. According to the sentiments Alderman expressed, city planners in LaGrange were crafting a narrative to symbolize their town. As Poll discussed, this narrative sought to veil the potentially dark past and present in which social and economic inequality was dominant.

The placement of the park and statue also articulated the ideas Henry intended to impose on the town of LaGrange. Originally, the space was designed to serve as a “park and pleasure ground.”²¹ The first park was designed to sit downtown, already a prominent location due to its close proximity to important local landmarks such as the government center, the art museum, the cultural museum, small shops, and LaGrange College. It was a circular area, with a fountain placed at the center. The park grounds were well manicured and featured an encircling sidewalk and benches to encourage visitors to stop by. An article in the *Atlanta Journal and Constitution Magazine* highlighted the city’s accomplishments in regards to the park area, quoting a local woman as saying that the park “gave LaGrange a new hairdo, a facial and new clothes” (Figure 11). It praised the town as being “one of the most attractive shopping centers in the state.” The same article also contained a detailed map of the town, with key features noted on a legend. As seen in Figure 12, the first item on the list of numbered spaces is the Memorial Park, or Court Square Park.²² Such media commendation served as the type of press those in LaGrange desired for their town.

During the bicentennial, the area underwent many changes as it became the new Lafayette Park. This new space utilized a connection to history in order to further stimulate

²⁰ “Lafayette: Frenchman with American Heart...” *LaGrange Daily News*, 26 Feb. 1973.

²¹ “Deed of Gift,” Deed Book 52, 548.

²² Andrew Sparks, “LaGrange...The City That Wove Its Way to Wealth,” *Atlanta Journal and Constitution Magazine*, October 15, 1950.

public involvement and economic gain. LaGrange certainly encouraged the transference of collective memory by supporting actions to increase tourism. Henry, town planners, and the media purported that the new park and statue offered enhancement to commerce in the downtown area of the city. In theory, local business owners who held a stake in and around the Lafayette Square would benefit from the increased foot traffic to the area. As discussed in Chapter Two, increasing the amount of visitors to the downtown shopping district was often deemed by the city officials as helpful for the local economy and shops.

Visitors were invited to explore the park, which was laid out with a simple brick walking path surrounded by in-ground lights. The park and statue served as ideal venues for decorative items, including flowers grown there year-round, and decorations for local events, such as the LaGrange College homecoming. Overall, the memorial was designed to be welcoming for visitors, locals, and tourists. Its location in an important section of town also hinted that the statue, park, and all they represented were also important and worthy of belonging in an upscale part of town.

Representation of time and history were also integral to the way the statue and park were presented to the public. The construction and redevelopment of the park and the installment of the Lafayette statue were originally tasks related to the American Bicentennial. They were used as both important spaces for celebration and as signifiers of that celebratory time. Yet, they were meant to mark a larger ideology for the town as a whole, and to hopefully develop a future based around these ascribed ideas. In a way, the memorial was intended to be timeless, while referring to an idealized past and drawing upon the ideals of this collective memory. William Fitzhugh Brundage, in his book *The Southern Past: A Clash of Race and Memory*, noted how the Southern elite systematically revised the past, endorsing their racial privilege and power. In many places

they constructed museums and monuments in public spaces justifying their version of history.²³ This trend of commemoration continued well past the immediate time after the Civil War however, as demonstrated by the ideology presented by the Lafayette statue in LaGrange.

The Lafayette Park and statue were openly displayed for the purposes of encouraging the population of LaGrange to believe the history and ideas it represented. The layout of the square determined the preeminence of the statue of Lafayette in particular. As seen in Figure 13, not only is the statue the centerpiece of the square, it is also upraised on a dais at the center of the newly designed fountain, declaring for all the supreme and triumphant nature of Lafayette's character and all his character represented. Also, a plaque was placed in the original LaGrange-Troup County Park and then kept even after the park was renamed for Lafayette that stated, "To the Builders of LaGrange and Troup County."²⁴ The plaque further tied the imagined history of Lafayette to the history of LaGrange itself. Indeed, this plaque implied that Lafayette was a prominent figure in the creation of the town.

The connection to Lafayette and the ideals Henry affiliated with Lafayette were the sentiments of freedom for all, liberty for the common person, and a deep respect for the established past. These ideals were meant to encapsulate the history of the LaGrange community. This basis of falsehood, or perhaps the adherence to local myth, demonstrates how partial truths inform practices of history teaching. However, the history constructed and represented by this statue neglects a contested past in which struggles of race and gender were a factor. Instead the statue told the story of the white male elite. By creating a French male as the town hero and placing him in an important area of town, Henry pushed other historical narratives to the margins. In this fashion Henry and the other town planners and media described and reinforced a

²³ William Fitzhugh Brundage, *The Southern Past: A Clash of Race and Memory* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009).

²⁴ "Deed of Gift," Deed Book 52, 549.

new identity. It was one that could be detailed by that of a single narrative that neglected the history of minorities. Since the actions of prominent members of the LaGrange community led to the creation of a new identity, it must be considered the role identity played in the town previously.

The concept of redesigning the past as a means to create identity occurred in LaGrange, as it did elsewhere. For LaGrange escaping the background of slavery and persecution was often difficult. LaGrange sought to do this by commemorating the nationally recognized history of the American Revolution instead of a more uncomfortable history of intolerance and Confederate loss. The celebrations of the bicentennial allowed for LaGrange to transition away from a southern narrative, trying instead to emulate a national identity, one often attributed more to the North. Yet this newly created history, with its leanings towards American Exceptionalism and its omission of realism in regards to race, was problematic. Place played an invaluable role in the push to create memory and cultivate identity. Public spaces, such as the downtown park square of LaGrange, served as an environment in which monuments could be placed, acting as signifiers of the meanings and stories those who created them wished to tell. Henry, LaGrange College, the Bicentennial Commission, and the Callaway Foundation, utilized this space to promote ideas of American Exceptionalism, clearly establishing that LaGrange embodied the ideas of freedom and equality for all. Yet the story personified by the Lafayette Statue and Park disregarded a large segment of the population, misrepresenting the town history as one of total perfection and equality, instead of forming an inclusive interpretation of history. Those influential in the community, such as Waights G. Henry, the LaGrange city council, the *LaGrange Daily News*, and the Callaway Foundation, all supported this created history in a fashion suggesting the importance of their personal motivations, such as economic benefit and community adoration.

They desired to craft an identity based upon historical memory that focused on the positive aspects of LaGrange society. The following chapters will discuss in greater depth the expressed and unexpressed reasons for bolstering the cultural landscape of LaGrange and explore the elimination of race from this created narrative.



Figure 11 – Andrew Sparks, "LaGrange... The City That Wove Its Way to Wealth,"
Atlanta Journal and Constitution Magazine, October 15, 1950.



The beautiful park, finished last year, was responsible for widespread remodeling of stores in the business district. One woman said it gave LaGrange a new hairdo, a facial and new clothes.

October 15, 1950.

Figure 11 – Andrew Sparks, “LaGrange...The City That Wove Its Way to Wealth,”
Atlanta Journal and Constitution Magazine, October 15, 1950.

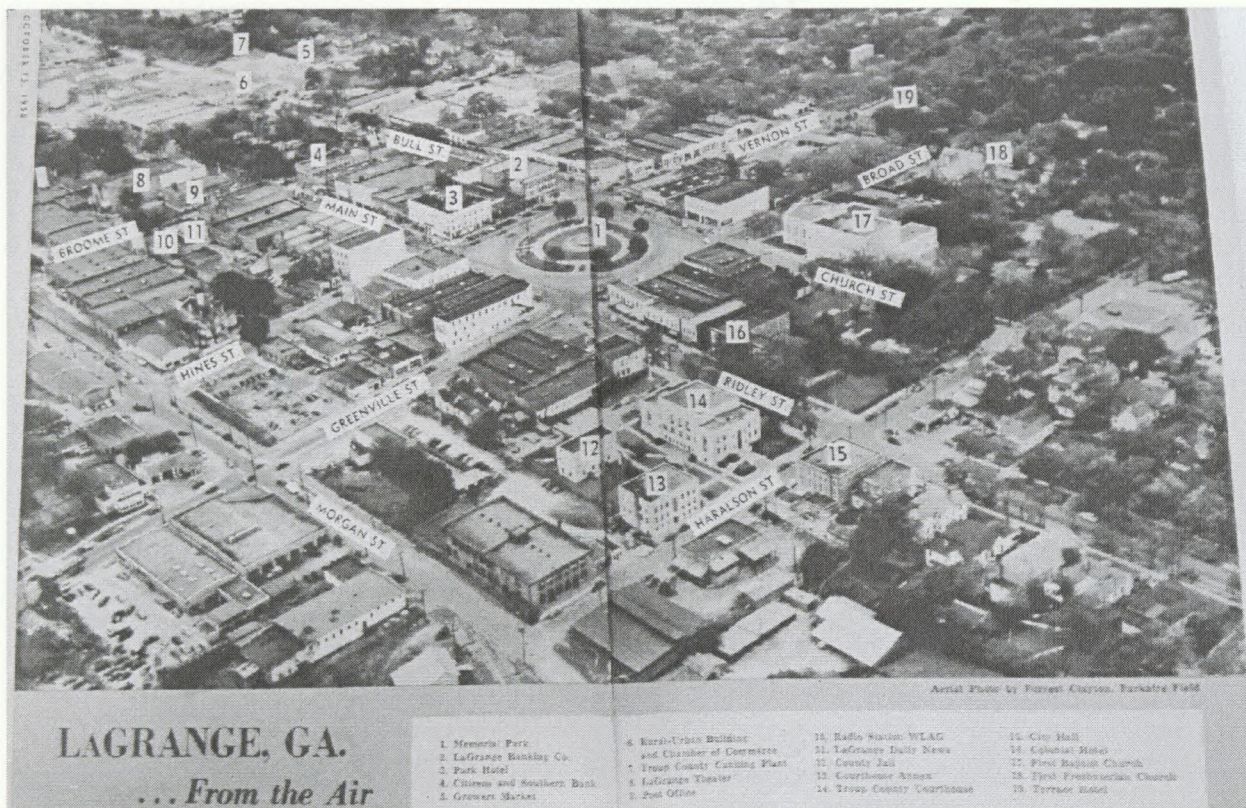


Figure 12 – Forrest Clayton, “Aerial Photo of LaGrange, GA,” in “LaGrange...The City That Wove Its Way to Wealth,” by Andrew Sparks, *Atlanta Journal and Constitution Magazine*, October 15, 1950.

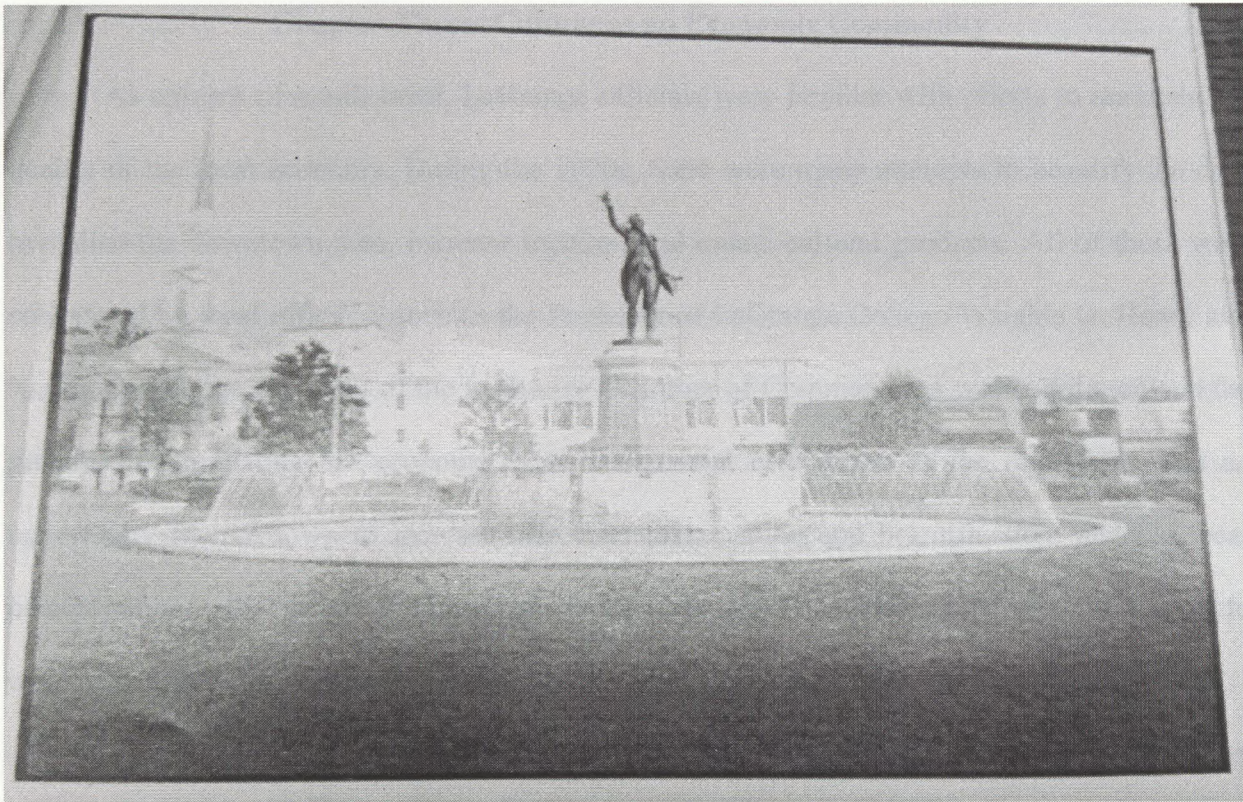


Figure 13 – “Lafayette Square,” LaGrange College Archives, n.d.

Chapter Three: Culture as an Economic Commodity

As citizens of a mill town, LaGrange officials were familiar with efforts to maintain the quality of the local economy. During the 1970s, there were many attempts to beautify the city, revitalize the downtown area, increase tourism, and create cultural products. All of these were considered by local officials, such as the President of LaGrange College Waights G. Henry and Jimmy Daniel, the president of the LaGrange Chamber of Commerce, as worthwhile tools in the process of stimulating the economy. The bicentennial celebration of the mid-1970s was an opportunity for the town to increase efforts in preservation and beautification, and the local newspaper and other private groups, such as the Callaway Foundation, supported the project to increase tourism.

According to Joan Fitzgerald and Nancey Green Leigh, both of whom study urban economic development, there are five broad trends of economic development practice. Phase one begins in the 1930s and consisted of attracting industry and lowering production costs utilizing tax abatements and incentives, land assembly and write downs, and by increasing public infrastructure. Phase two, in the 1960s, brought about both political and scholarly critiques of the development practices, bringing with them advocacy for new methods. The next phase dealt with responding to critique; it was at this time that state and local governments attempted new programs to help local markets and added funding for research and development projects. Phase three also encompassed the beginnings of equity planning, a type of planning devoted to the redistribution of resources in favor of the poor and working class. The trend to plan in regards to equity continued in the fourth phase of the 1980s, combined with a push for environmental sustainability. The fifth phase concerns itself with urban sprawl and other regional problems.

Portions of all of these phases continue in later ones, showing that economic development and redevelopment contain multifaceted practices.¹

The case of the 1970s and LaGrange was mired in the second phase. This was defined by its search for a concrete goal for economic development, as well as an inward look at who was attempting to implement certain plans. The participants were often found to be local businesspeople working with government officials or wealthy landowners seeking to uplift their property values. Often it was in their best interests to uplift their local economies as they typically held investments in their town or city.² This was certainly the case with LaGrange, and the media supported these individuals and groups as they contributed to town planning. One article from the *LaGrange Daily News* advocated preservation for the sake of bolstering the local economy. It suggested that many historical preservation programs across the country assisted towns by “increasing property values, bank deposits, and business volume,” citing examples such as Boston, New Orleans, Savannah, and Columbus. The article also named one group in particular as assisting in these preservation programs – the newly created Ocfuskee Historical Society.³ Literature produced by the United States Advisory Council of Historic Preservation also purported that preservation was a successful means of boosting town economies, therefore encouraging local groups to participate in programs of historical preservation.⁴ Another article, an editorial by John Lawrence, the Head of the Art Department at LaGrange College, explained the great influence of the downtown Development Authority, who he described as “an organization of businessmen located on and near Lafayette Square.”⁵ His assessment pointed out

¹ Joan Fitzgerald and Nancey Green Leigh, *Economic Revitalization: Cases and Strategies for City and Suburb* (Los Angeles: SAGE Publications, 2002): 9-10.

² Fitzgerald and Leigh, *Economic Revitalization*, 11.

³ “Landmarks to be Saved,” *LaGrange Daily News*, November 16, 1973, 10.

⁴ Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, *The Contribution of Historic Preservation to Urban Revitalization* (Washington: The Council, 1979).

⁵ John Lawrence, “Vitality in Downtown,” *LaGrange Daily News*, March 1, 1977.

that there were people in LaGrange who sought out economic gain through new practices. Other groups, such as the LaGrange Bicentennial Commission, the Ivy Garden Club, the Elms and Roses Garden Club Council, and other historical societies were just as successful in their backing of the new celebrations and building up of the town square in order to assist the economy. These groups often retained the power to determine land use and events. In fact, it was beneficial for these groups, such as the local historical society and the garden clubs, to assist the town, serving almost as a means of self-validation that declared them necessary.

LaGrange attributed much of its economic booming in the late nineteenth century to its first cotton mill, which was in operation from 1847 to 1923. Named Robertson Woolen Mill, this was established by Robertson, Leslie, and Company of Meriwether County Construction. From the factory grew a village, which would continue to expand until the mill moved to LaGrange. Between 1888 and 1922, LaGrange experienced the frantic construction of cotton and cotton oil mills. LaGrange was home to many factories over the years, and though Robertson was the first, it was not the last. Next was Troup Factory, established in 1845, and later renamed Park Cotton Mills. The town also housed many others, including LaGrange Mills (1888), Dixie Cotton Mills (1895), Hogansville Manufacturing Company (1899), Unity Cotton Mills (1900), later known as Unity Spinning Mills in 1909, Elm City Cotton Mills (1905), Dunson Mills (1910), Hillside Cotton Mills (1915), Stark Mills (1922), Valley Waste Mills (1927), and Oakleaf Mills (1928). It was during this early surge of mill growth that Fuller E. Callaway became a mill entrepreneur and local industrialist. His influence over many of these businesses resulted in the creation of Callaway Mills, a merger of allied plants that was later managed by his son Cason J. Callaway.⁶

⁶ Forrest Clark Johnson III, Glenda Major, and Kaye Lanning Murchew, *Trouse through Troup County: A Guide to its Architecture and History* (LaGrange, Georgia: Troup County Historical Society, 1996).

⁷ Cobb, *Georgia*, 34.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 61.

⁶ Clifford L. Smith, *History of Troup County* (Atlanta: Foote and Davies Company, 1933): 117-121.

Northern investors and locals also financed these establishments, fostering hopes for industrialization.⁷

Hopes they remained, since in the early twentieth century Georgia was still primarily sustained by an agricultural economy, or by industries related to agriculture, such as cotton mills. This agricultural system was difficult for many tenant farmers, who made up the majority of the Georgia workforce. These people often remained in poverty, reaping few benefits from cotton production.⁸ Most of this poor workforce continued to be in a hard place even when manufacturing was slowly introduced to the state. Efforts to bring industry to Georgia intensified after World War I. Cotton production fell from just over two million bales in 1918 to just over half a million in 1923. This was mainly due to the influence of the boll weevil, a major scourge in the early 1920s that caused cotton crops to fail.⁹ Almost half a million Georgians left the state during boll weevil epidemic; among them were many African Americans who sought higher wages and better living conditions in the North. Dropping cotton prices and the Great Depression also contributed to the decline of the viability of cotton cultivation in Georgia.¹⁰ By the 1930s, over half the labor force of Georgia had shifted to nonagricultural – yet not very remunerative – pursuits.

The spread of the textile mill economy allowed LaGrange to grow into a more modern town, with its population increasing by almost thirty eight percent from 1920 to 1950.¹¹ Many of the LaGrange mills suffered with the rest of the United States during the Great Depression. For many, such as Dixie Mills (seen in Figure 14 and 15), this economic downturn caused shutdowns

⁷ Forrest Clark Johnson III, Glenda Major, and Kaye Lanning Minchew, *Travels through Troup County: A Guide to its Architecture and History* (LaGrange, Georgia: Troup County Historical Society, 1996).

⁸ Cobb, *Georgia Odyssey*, 54.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 61.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 53.

¹¹ Johnson, Major, and Minchew.

and strikes, despite the plant's attempts to increase employee recreation with facilities such as tennis courts and softball fields, and with cooking courses.¹² With the farming economy in decline, voters across the state approved a constitutional amendment providing tax exemptions for new factories in an effort to stimulate the economy. These efforts remained unsuccessful until the Second World War, when defense expenditures supplied the capital necessary to generate funds for rapid industrialization. This money served to help free the state from its reliance on plantation agriculture.¹³ World War II boosted production for a short time during and after the war, and this was a relatively successful time for mills like Dixie in LaGrange.

Recruiting new industry remained an important mission for Georgia governors and other political leaders for decades to follow. A large draw for industrial investors was the workforce, most of which was desperate for work, so much so that they would accept even the lowest of wages. Workers were kept in poor spirits by Governor Eugene Talmadge (1933-1937, 1941-1943), who used the state militia to break up strikes and who encouraged other state legislatures to pass an inflexible right to work law. Local governments continued these actions, even requiring unions to pay heavy license fees.¹⁴ Efforts to keep down unionization, teamed with the persistent efforts to create new industry at any cost, resulted in a definite shift to factory industry by the late 1950s. At this time more Georgians worked in manufacturing than in agriculture, comprising over twenty-seven percent of the total workforce by the end of the decade. This growth was mainly due to the attraction of cheap, unskilled laborers.¹⁵

LaGrange suffered along with the rest of Georgia after the 1950s, seeing a decline in mill industry and leading to the local companies, such as Callaway Mills, selling their properties to

¹² F.C. Johnson, "Dixie Mills Historic Timeline," *Troup County Archives*, n.d.; "LaGrange Rotary Bulletin," *Troup County Archives*, 10 January, 1962.

¹³ Cobb, *Georgia Odyssey*, 62-63.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 65.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 66-67.

outside organizations. This development also led to a decline in population as job opportunities decreased.¹⁶ George Busbee, who served as Governor from 1975 to 1983, adamantly sought out economic development in the state. First, he endeavored to court new businesses to convince them to invest in Georgia. Part of this challenge involved traveling to make connections with foreign businesses. He also made deals allowing international banks to do business in Georgia. In order to encourage such investments, his administration spent money on infrastructure, such as transportation. Previously, much of the transportation in Georgia was through railways built to cater to the old cotton industry, partially leading to the importance of LaGrange's location between two major cities in that process – Columbus and Atlanta.¹⁷ Busbee's efforts allowed Georgia to move towards the end of the century as a rising power in industry and business.¹⁸ Yet these efforts were not enough to stimulate the economy; indeed woes remained in Georgia, leaving many towns depressed.

By the mid to late twentieth century, the economic plight of many small towns was dire. This was particularly true of rural areas and regions with flagging industry. Many policies since the 1960s focused on decentralizing government funding and sought out community involvement and competitive funding to make functional economic plans. These plans meant that it often depended on individual towns and cities to build their own economies. This proved a detriment to many small towns that were unfamiliar with facilitating federal and state funding, leading to further halting of economic development as local economies were forced to rely on a limited amount of local revenue. Such towns began searching for alternative methods for boosting the local economy.

¹⁶ Johnson, Major, and Minchew.

¹⁷ Scott Reynolds Nelson, *Iron Confederacies: Southern Railways, Klan Violence, and Reconstruction* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999): 177-178.

¹⁸ Meyers, *The Empire State of the South*, 233-234.

In this context, revitalizing their downtown areas emerged as a possible solution. This process included the renovation and repurposing, emphasizing existing structures, artifacts, and spaces that represented the historic and cultural identity.¹⁹ In some states, such as Pennsylvania, federal organizations such as the Main Street and Elm Street programs provided assistance for local projects based on the revitalization of downtown and main street areas. Often these efforts included plans to assist businesses as well. Yet, these federally operated programs were limited in that some towns, due to financial limitations, were ineligible or unable to participate. These federal programs also required that many towns work with local citizen groups (such as historical societies), non-profit organizations, local businesses, and even other regional governments, in the hopes that funding would be easier with multiple groups cooperating. The programs also identified several amenities, such as geological spaces of interest, structures of historical relevance, and vibrant local cultures, as being helpful in the revitalization process.²⁰

Indeed, it was important to cultivate such resources as a means to alleviate economic struggle. The town of LaGrange relied on non-profit organizations to assist in the improvement of the identified amenities leading to revitalization. The Fuller E. Callaway Foundation, a charitable organization of Troup County, Georgia, involved itself in many projects around LaGrange. This foundation assisted in not only the creation of historic districts and spaces, but also provided funds for the Court Square, and later the Lafayette Square. In 1948, the Callaway Foundation donated \$12,500 to rebuild the Court Square and to construct an electric fountain at its center.²¹ Callaway also assisted in the procurement of the Lafayette Statue and the

¹⁹ Caru Bowns and Alison Stephenson, "Toward Small Town Revitalization in the Middle Susquehanna River Valley: Re-Assessing Historic and Regional Resources for Collaborative Development," *Material Culture* 42, no. 2 (2010): 8.

²⁰ Bowns and Stephenson, "Toward Small Town Revitalization," 9-10.

²¹ Mayor and Council Meeting Minutes, 1948; "Deed of Gift," Deed Book 52, 547-550.

bicentennial festivities.²² This steady support did not go unnoticed in LaGrange. In fact, the Callaway family received its own commemoration and festivities. In 1974, the family home of Fuller E. Callaway, mill industrialist, was dedicated as a historical home and given a plaque: "In honor of Fuller E. Callaway Jr., in grateful appreciation of his many benevolences, presented by the citizens of LaGrange and Troup County."²³

LaGrange was not the only place hoping to use its urban renewal of the town square to revitalize the town's economy. Methods of economic redevelopment often relied on the arts and culture similar to how LaGrange utilized such items. Other areas also utilized cultural products as a way to boost local economies. The construction of the Lincoln Center, a large performing arts complex in Manhattan's Lincoln Square, is an example of a city's attempt to incorporate the arts into a new urban plan, hoping to also assist the landscape economically. It was part of the largest federal urban renewal projects ever funded, consisting of a massive reconstruction of the square and its shops and surroundings. This new building served to suggest to citizens that the town was on a good path, one that would be economically and culturally productive. As in LaGrange, the media devoted much attention to the new square addition. In 1960, *Look Magazine* ran a piece on the urban renewal project, declaring that the Lincoln Center would demonstrate to many the "cultural maturity" of the United States. The same article argued that the initial costs of this new center were far less than the benefits this new center would bring about.²⁴

In the case of LaGrange, the statue of Lafayette was placed in the center of the main street square, an area surrounded by small shops and close to the government center and the

²² "Local Bicentennial Events Recorded for History," *LaGrange Daily News*, November 18, 1976.

²³ "Callaway-Hudson Home Changed Hands Often," *LaGrange Daily News*, February 12, 1974.

²⁴ Julia L. Foulkes, "Streets and Stages: Urban Renewal and the Arts after World War II," *Journal of Social History* 44, no. 2 (Winter 2010): 414-415.

LaGrange College. It displayed the desire to characterize the town as one of high status and wealth, serving not only as a tourist draw, but as a symbol for local citizens that the town was in good spirits. The statute and the beautification of the square served as a landmark to draw people to this area of town, hopefully to spend money at the surrounding shops. These efforts were seemingly appreciated by the general public. In a 1977 "Letters to the Editor" section of the *LaGrange Daily News*, one submission praised the efforts of town planners in preserving the Lafayette Square shops, saying they are fortunate to have a dedicated team of people working to better the town. The author, John Lawrence, specifically mentioned the actions he felt to be beneficial. He wrote: "The oak trees they have planted will make the downtown area more attractive as well as a more pleasant place to shop...The new sign ordinance, the trees and additional parking facilities can only add to the vitality of downtown LaGrange."²⁵ Editors of the newspaper must have encouraged this idea among readers, hoping to perpetuate the notion that the cultivation of these main street areas and local history were an important process in using urban renewal for stimulating the economy.

According to research by economics researchers Morgan, Lambe, and Freyer, there are three dominant methods of focusing towns' resources on alternative methods of helping the economy away from the more difficult strategy of recruiting industrial companies to the area. These three strategies are "place-based development, economic gardening, and creativity and talent cultivation." These methods involve the town working to employ its regional strengths. Place-based development involves creating strategies that capitalize on the special qualities of an area, such as history, culture, and geography. Creativity and talent cultivation focus on creating

²⁵ Board and Supervisors, "Toward Small Town Revitalization," 11.

²⁶ Mayor and Council Meeting Minutes, 1942; Mayor and Council Meeting Minutes, 1948.

²⁷ "French Flag Given City," *LaGrange Daily News*, July 22, 1975.

²⁸ "LaGrange Offers Touch of France," *The Chatham County Press*, Sunday, September 1, 1975.

²⁹ "LaGrange Offers Touch of France," *The Chatham County Press*, Sunday, September 1, 1975.

³⁰ John Lawrence, "Vitality in Downtown," *LaGrange Daily News*, March 1, 1977.

an environment conducive to individuals or companies investing in the arts. This includes subsidies for artists and support for public demonstrations and sale of local arts.²⁶

LaGrange utilized two of the strategies identified by Morgan, Lambe, and Freyer: place-based development and, to a lesser extent, talent cultivation. Early on, the town planned to create a new park in the town square that would serve to draw people in and bring more business to local downtown shops. The city council conceived of these plans as early as 1942, but they did not come to fruition until after World War II.²⁷ These plans reached an all-time high in the 1970s, when the town participated in events honoring the nation's bicentennial. In regards to art, the town hosted an "Affair on the Square," an annual event held each July. During the bicentennial, the event was Bastille Day-themed, to draw attention to local artists and connect with the Lafayette and French-related celebrations already going on.²⁸ Connections to Bastille Day were frequent in the 1970s. The Affair on the Square festival, taking place in Lafayette Park, was meant both to celebrate local art, but also to showcase the newly added Lafayette statue.²⁹ LaGrange entertained its own share of culture-related economic uplift strategies.

The economic system in the South resulted in the implementation of many new economic plans, including those of tourism encouragement and urban renewal through cultural uplift. Alongside strategies to uplift local economies through increasing the emphasis on local history and culture was another alternative – tourism. According to MarketGeorgia.org, tourism is currently one of the largest industries in the state of Georgia, employing 405,000 persons and generating fifty one billion in sales as of the year 2012.³⁰ This industry is considered one of the

²⁶ Bowns and Stephenson, "Toward Small Town Revitalization," 11.

²⁷ Mayor and Council Meeting Minutes, 1942; Mayor and Council Meeting Minutes, 1948.

²⁸ "French Flag Given City," *LaGrange Daily News*, July 22, 1975.

²⁹ "La Grange Offers Touch of France," *The Chattanooga Times*, Sunday, September 3, 1978.

³⁰ "The Importance of Tourism on the Economy," *Market Georgia*, accessed January 12, 2014, <http://www.marketgeorgia.org/article/tourism-impact>.

most crucial sources of economic growth, contributing to an increase in employment and income. Tourist expenditures account for their own type of export, bringing a source of revenue for popular destinations, and any other city or town that can cultivate its growth. A substantial amount of visitors make their way to Georgia each year. Many of these visitors engage in events or activities involving local history or tradition, or "heritage tourism." This term developed over the years, parallel to historiographical movements to study previously-unheard voices, such as minority groups and everyday people.³¹ Therefore there is a push to develop more local history centered on newly "discovered" traditions.

Often tourism has been studied through the lens of international travel, where it boosted local economies, increased household incomes, encouraged tourism-related government programs, and led to more international trade.³² Economists Khalil, Kakar, and Waliullah, for instance, examined the correlation between the tourist industry and the economy in Pakistan. Pakistan offers a great deal of historical, archaeological, and geographical sites that draw tourist interest. Using annual data containing information on tourism growth and economic expansion, spanning from the years 1960 to 2005, these researchers attempted to ascertain how the two interacted, determining that there was a strong correlation between the two.³³ In their study, they found that tourism increases GDP, but also that economic expansion is crucial for further tourism development.³⁴ Following a similar train of thought, planners in LaGrange hoped to increase tourism as well, though those in LaGrange approached increasing tourism from a stance of city

³¹ Anne Farrisee, "Heritage Tourism: Telling the Rest of the Story," *The Georgia Historical Quarterly* 83, no. 1 (Spring 1999): 101-102.

³² Samina Khalil, Mehmood Khan Kakar, and Waliullah and Afia Malik, "Role of Tourism in Economic Growth: Empirical Evidence from Pakistan Economy," *The Pakistan Development Review* 46, no. 4 (Winter 2007): 985.

³³ Khalil, Kakar, and Malik, "Role of Tourism in Economic Growth," 986, 989.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 989, 993. The research in Pakistan implied that the expansion of infrastructure and the creation of government policies assisting roads, airports, and tax incentives for hotels and other tourism-related industries in turn benefited the economy as tourism increased.

beautification and a connection to local history. While economic benefit was one of the primary goals for increasing tourism, they did not attempt to expand economically in order to increase tourism. Instead they tried to use the tourism industry to create economic expansion.

The case of LaGrange fits into the category of a town trying to cultivate heritage tourism. Local tourist interests were encouraged by some of the most influential residents. For instance, Jimmy Daniel, President of the LaGrange Chamber of Commerce, spoke well of the efforts to increase the tourism industry in town in 1970. In his announcement to the public in the *LaGrange Booster*, a newspaper published by the LaGrange Chamber of Commerce, Daniel praised the local Tourism Committee for its actions in making LaGrange a finalist in the statewide "Stay and See Georgia" program. He credited tourism as economically important, saying that "many projects of the committee were beneficial...and will continue to reap benefits for the community." He also stated that "tourism is big business and brings in new money to the community." Daniel ended his public address by announcing his intent to continue these actions, hopefully making LaGrange not simply a finalist, but a winner.³⁵ Yet, despite many plans to implement attention-grabbing events and places for tourism, it remained difficult to achieve high amounts of visitors in small to middle-sized towns.³⁶ Henry hoped to use the bicentennial celebrations to boost the economy. He stated that the newly added Lafayette statue would be "a cultural influence as well as an economic asset," certainly implying his goals of attracting visitors to LaGrange by creating a cultural area they would want to visit.³⁷

Other places around the world realized the need to shift away from their traditional economies as well in this period. Like LaGrange, many utilized history to create a tourist market. For instance, in Guanajuato, Mexico, a waning demand for silver, the area's most precious

³⁵ Jimmy Daniel, "From Your President: Stay and See," *The LaGrange Booster*, March and April, 1970.

³⁶ Farrissee, "Heritage Tourism," 105.

³⁷ "Proposed for Square: City to Get Lafayette Statue," *LaGrange Daily News*, April 19, 1974.

resource, caused the town to seek out alternative sources of income during the twentieth century. They began relying on the town's former glory in order to boost tourism to the area, turning their history into a new commodity.³⁸ While the silver industry decreased in profitability, there was a definite increase of visitors to the city. During World War II and after, many Americans chose to not travel to Europe and vacationed to Mexico instead. Tourism increased so much that it became the predominant economic sector in Guanajuato, which capitalized on these new traveling patterns. Many resources were transferred away from the silver mines and poured instead into the service industry, such as hotels. Such efforts also included the promotion of the Festival Internacional Cervantino, a performing arts festival that appeals mainly to tourists, and the marketing of the town's architecture. The architecture itself included many churches, plazas, and winding alleys that became symbols of "Old Mexico" and the former wealth of silver mining towns.³⁹ Like Guanajuato, LaGrange saw tourism as a way to assist flagging industry, relying on local culture to help create a new market for tourists. The town also used the bicentennial celebrations as a means to accentuate this local connection to history, therefore making the town a more desired destination for visitors.

The increase of visitors in LaGrange created a demand to provide these tourists with not only a beautified town full of preserved history but also physical goods they could sell as mementos. The town of LaGrange utilized traditional methods of procuring funds for local projects by creating goods to sell to tourists. LaGrange sponsored items relating to their town history that could be purchased. This is a form of fetishism, as Karl Marx called it in *Capital*,

³⁸ Elizabeth Emma Ferry, "Memory as Wealth, History as Commerce: A Changing Economic Landscape in Mexico," *Ethos* 34, no. 2, Special Issue: The Immanent Past (June 2006): 299. The mining industry of Guanajuato started in 1550. Later the city was a focal point for the War of Independence from Spain in the early 1800s. This struggle was detrimental to the mines, as many of them were damaged. Yet by the 1850s production and profits increased, leading to the creation of many new town spaces and buildings. Unfortunately, the demand for silver decreased throughout the twentieth century, causing a demand for another market.

³⁹ Ferry, "Memory as Wealth, History as Commerce," 303.

explaining that all things become commodities under a capitalist system and that each of these commodified items has a subjective value that conceals the conditions under which they are created. Henry Klumpemhouwer, in an article from *Music and Marx*, applied this concept to culture, arguing that fetishism can apply to non-material items as well.⁴⁰ LaGrange used cultural items to get people to spend money in town. Both the idea of a constructed history and actual material goods were fetishized in LaGrange. Local connections to history, and to constructed history, became tools in the fashioning of a new market for consumption.

A revealing example of the fetishizing of cultural objects is when the town began selling medals of copper, silver, and gold that depicted the image of the Lafayette statue. These were commissioned by the First Georgia Mint and sold in LaGrange's Citizens and Southern Bank of West Georgia.⁴¹ The LaGrange Bicentennial Commission used these medals to both publicize and generate support for its events. In fact, while there is limited information about the medal sales, it must be noted that these were likely utilized in part to fund future events. The commission also successfully lobbied to have a commemorative stamp of the new Lafayette statue issued by the U.S. Postal Service. Likely this would have encouraged even more tourism.⁴² It has been suggested that most people visiting museums and other such monuments pertaining to history are often more interested in the material objects displayed, not the meaning behind such items. Such visitors also tend to seek out items supporting their romanticized vision of the past.⁴³ Henry, perhaps the largest supporter of the bicentennial celebrations, saw this as an opportunity to inform LaGrangians and tourists about the influence of Lafayette and his "contributions to

⁴⁰ Henry Klumpemhouwer, "Commodity-Form, Disavowal, and Practices of Music Theory," from *Music and Mark: Ideas, Practice, Politics* by Regula Burckhardt Qureshi, ed., (New York: Routledge, 2002): 33.

⁴¹ Waights G. Henry to Frank Hall Jr., 9 October 1974. Lafayette Collection.

⁴² Herman Talmadge, Sam Nunn, John J. Flynt Jr., and Jack Brintley to Elmer T. Klassen, 18 September, 1974, Lafayette Collection.

⁴³ David G. Vanderstrel, "Humanizing the Past: The Revitalization of the History Museum," *Journal of American Culture*, 20.

America's freedom." Henry's goal was to demonstrate, through the statue of Lafayette, two hundred years of liberty.⁴⁴ The meaning behind the statue was certainly more than just the erection of the statue itself. Indeed, it was the rendering of a man, but the main planner in its inception wished the project to have a deeper meaning and a broader economic purpose.

In conclusion, along with the rest of Georgia, LaGrange began transitioning to a manufacturing-based economy in the late nineteenth century. This transformation, while profitable, included many difficulties over the years, resulting in an underpaid workforce and a dependence on the cotton market. The efforts to assist this modernization process were far-reaching and left city planners and legislatures striving to utilize new economic practices in order to incentivize new industries and investors to come to the state. Small towns like LaGrange hoped to use urban renewal strategies, such as downtown revitalization in order to boost the local shopping areas and bring in new businesses. The town worked closely with local historical societies and charitable organizations, such as the Callaway Foundation. It also capitalized on its local history and art, strategies known as place-based development creativity and talent cultivation. These efforts went alongside other attempts to create material objects that could be purchased as a means to accrue funds for the town and its bicentennial celebrations. LaGrange in the 1970s wanted to bolster tourism to their area by cultivating a historical background for visitors to associate with the town. This desire resulted in a statue of Lafayette being placed in the town square, a testament to the heritage of the area. But in the eyes of the city planners, such as Dr. Henry, it also served as a precursor to economic development. This chapter discussed how history was used as an economic tool. The following chapter will the preservation of history it as a social indicator, building upon the concepts of preservation and explaining how efforts of

⁴⁴ "A Hero and a Dream," LaGrange Daily News, 1973.

preservation provide a context for social issues, creating an environment that celebrated history while omitting a related history of slavery and oppression.

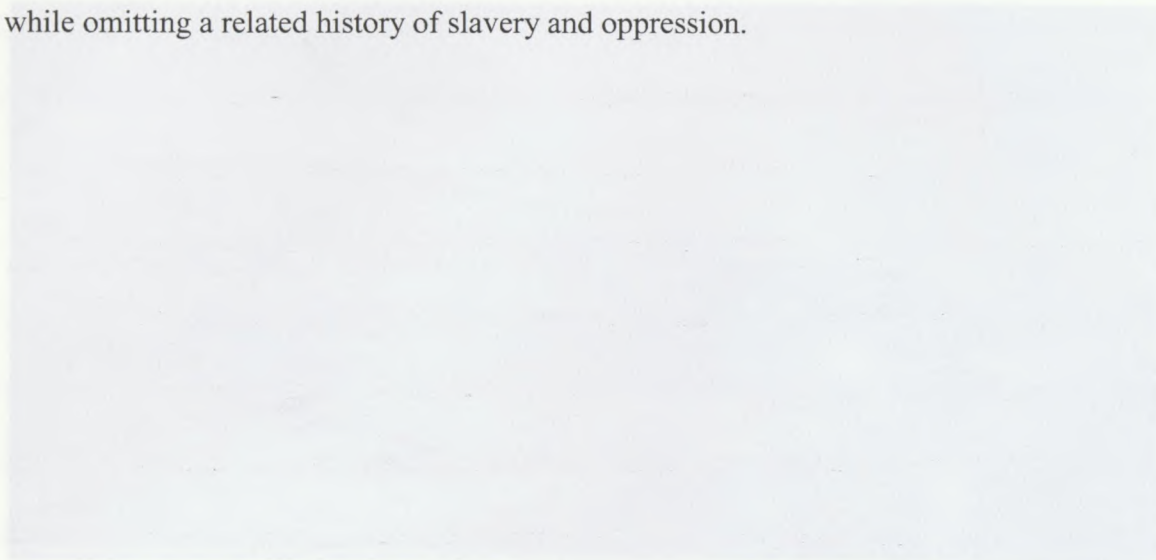


Figure 14 – "Post Cards from the Past, Photograph by J.L. Schaub," *LaGrange Daily News*, 20 September, 1903.



Figure 15 – "Blue Book Textile Directory 1901-1902," *Troup County Archives*, n.d.

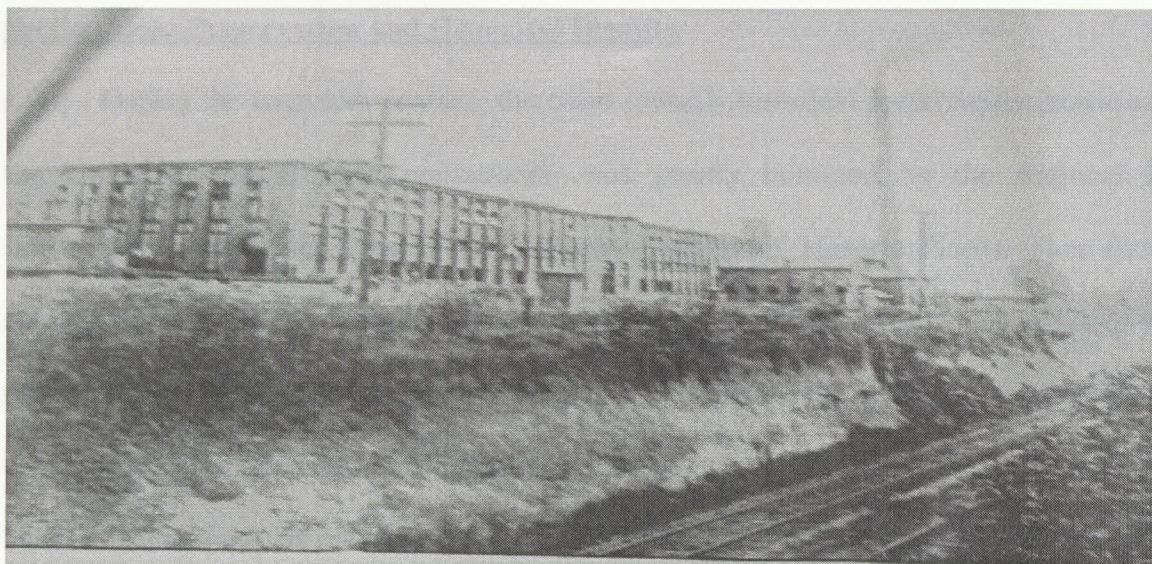


Figure 14 – “Post Cards from the Past, Photograph by J.L. Schaub,” *LaGrange Daily New*, 20 September, 1993.



Figure 15 – “Blue Book Textile Directory 1901-1901,” *Troup County Archives*, n.d.

¹ John H. Sprinkle, Jr., *Crafting Preservation Criteria: The National Register of Historic Places and American Historic Preservation* (New York: Routledge, 2014).

² Kelly Boyer Sargent, *The 1970s* (Santa Barbara: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2007), 95-96.

³ Christine M. Boyer, *The City of Collective Memory: Its Historical Imagery and Architectural Experimentation* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996), 284-285.

Chapter 4: The Role of Preservation in Creating Historical Identity in LaGrange

Section One: Preservation and Historical Identity

During the twentieth century, the trend towards historical preservation increased across the United States. Historic preservation was greatly bolstered by the National Historic Preservation Act, which created the National Register of Historic Places. This allowed an appeals process for the creation of national historic landmarks based upon a set of national criteria.¹ This act increased the involvement of interested citizens, not simply organizations, who began to preserve and reproduce historical buildings, spaces, historic objects and artifacts, and a historic feel and way of life. New preservation legislation and the bicentennial encouraged a turn to the past, resulting in an increase in the restoration of old buildings and renovation of old homes for modern living, often marketed as fashionable historic districts.²

Preservation programs were complex, because each city had a different historical background. They also varied greatly due to the expectations of those advocating preservationist policies, such as architects, historians, real estate entrepreneurs, conservationists, city planners, and local residents.³ An article in *History News*, a quarterly magazine of the American Association for State and Local History (AASLH), provides a useful assessment of the movement for preservation. The article explains that often the actions of preservationist groups were spurred on by magazines such as *Good Housekeeping* and *Ladies Home Journal*. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the colonial revival also affected methods of preservation. It focused heavily on the lifestyles and aesthetic of colonial times. Preservation of homes and objects was viewed as a way to connect to the perceived virtues of a bygone era.

¹ John H. Sprinkle, Jr., *Crafting Preservation Criteria: The National Register of Historic Places and American Historic Preservation* (New York: Routledge, 2014).

² Kelly Boyer Sagert, *The 1970s* (Santa Barbara: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2007): 95-96.

³ Christine M. Boyer, *The City of Collective Memory: Its Historical Imagery and Architectural Entertainments* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996): 384-385.

During this time, many historic house museums were founded. Later, during the 1976 bicentennial, a new wave of house museums and preserved homes were created. The article thus points out that while some rooms and homes were researched by preservationists, many were based on the "colonial spirit," and therefore relied on their curators and directors to retain their historical accuracy. As the article suggests, many of the preserved homes were based on regional interests and local fervor, and small towns seized the opportunity to celebrate their past and to connect it to larger national themes, such as the bicentennial.⁴

This chapter explores how the same dynamics developed in Georgia, where many cities became part of the preservationist movement, drawing not only on national but also local history. Savannah, for instance, was a major city that developed its own methods of preserving history. Like many other towns, preservation in Savannah often began with large housing projects. The Historical Savannah Foundation, created in 1954, conducted a campaign to restore and preserve the city plans and nineteenth century homes, all created for the goal of increasing "Savannah's appeal as a national tourist attraction."⁵ Preservation of vintage housing and districts, especially near the traditional business and downtown areas, was determined as a long-term project. Though, when city analysts predicted the decline of central neighborhoods during suburbanization, resistance to this tendency was soon noted as groups and individuals promoted preservation. In particular, areas where the wealthy lived were able to resist the trend of deterioration through zoning and legislations, ensuring the effectiveness of the preservation movement. While these efforts were not always tied to local history, many places capitalized on their rich historical background and associations. Or if they could not utilize a local history, they

⁴ Brenda Reigle, "But Is It Really History?: Interpreting the Colonial Revival at Your Historic House Museum," *History News* 51, no. 2 (Spring 1996): 14-15.

⁵ Coleman, *A History of Georgia*, 386-387.

invented a tradition to guide their own refashioning instead.⁶ As part of this second group, the city of LaGrange connected its local history to a larger national history, celebrating the American bicentennial through a hero made to embody the spirit of its region.

Individuals and institutions alike utilized preservation in order to celebrate the bicentennial celebrations of American Independence from Great Britain. For instance, the Butler Institute of American Art of Youngstown, Ohio, began its own bicentennial-inspired programs. The Butler Institute's program, entitled the Preservation-Experimentation-Presentation, began in 1969 and involved the preservation, experimentation, and a public presentation designed to commemorate the 1976 bicentennial. The program was designed to create interest in bicentennial celebration and planning, particularly in regards to preservation.⁷ The preservation portion of the program consisted of the cleaning and restoration of several hundred paintings, including a collection of Native American pieces. It also included experimentation with new methods of preserving artwork.⁸ The final step in the program was an educational exhibit aimed at displaying the preserved works and at illustrating the new methods of preservation utilized in program.⁹ For example, in the city of LaGrange, Henry and the other bicentennial planners and preservationists wanted not only to preserve history but to educate the community in these created histories.

History expositions were also used to cultivate community before the bicentennial. In her assessment of the California Midwinter International Exposition of 1894, historian Barbara Berglund found that there were definite connections between representations of the past and the current social and political situation. The California Midwinter International Expo, also known

⁶ Paul E. Patterson, ed. *The New Urban Reality* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institute Press, 1985): 72.

⁷ Eric C. Hulmer, "A Bicentennial Preservation Program," *Bulletin of the American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works* 13, no. 1 (Oct. 1972): 7.

⁸ Hulmer, "A Bicentennial Preservation Program," 5.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 6.

as the Midwinter Fair, was held at Golden Gate Park in San Francisco. It showcased exhibits commemorating the anniversary of Christopher Columbus' journey to the more recent history of California. Such events were meant to assuage contemporary concerns of class, gender, and race by focusing public attention on the glorified past, creating sentiments that many towns could recapture past greatness despite current hardship. The San Francisco elites were the most involved parties in organizing the exposition. There was also a large influence of journalists and local entrepreneurs.¹⁰

In LaGrange, too, those most concerned with planning and funding the festivities were wealthy elites or local interest groups, such as LaGrange College President Waights G. Henry and the Callaway Foundation. Berglund argued that these elites wished to represent the history and what they considered "American" in order to consolidate the norms they preferred, demonstrating themselves as content and ordered even in the face of national discontent. The exposition in San Francisco relied on nostalgia as a tool, particularly the trope of the "wild west," in order to downplay the contemporary anxieties. As Berglund demonstrated, nostalgia served as a means to unite groups, shifting focus away from regional problems.

The same happened in LaGrange. In San Francisco, the largest piece of the exposition was a replica mining camp; in LaGrange, this was the statue of Lafayette, one that was meant to represent past ideals while overlaying present issues.¹¹ Through the personal appreciation of the past, some found comfort and validation in the glory of their past. Those fascinated with the

identity. The California exposition showed primarily white men in their portrayals of its mining history, leaving the multicultural background of the mining days behind. Likewise, LaGrange

¹⁰ Barbara Berglund, "The Days of Old, the Days of Gold, the Days of '49': Identity, History, and Memory at the California Midwinter International Exposition, 1894," *The Public Historian* 25, no. 4 (Fall 2003): 27.

¹¹ Berglund, "The Days of Old, the Days of Gold, the Days of '49," 27-28.

mining camp sought their ideal man and a symbol of masculinity; similarly, LaGrange turned to veneration of a war hero, another symbol of manliness.¹²

Both places saw the rise of culture in regards to a creation myth that connected them to larger American history. In the case of the California Midwinter International Exposition, it was the creation of California as a state. In the case of La Grange, it was the connection to Lafayette and the American Revolutionary War. Ties to the past allowed both cities to overlook contemporary problems as well as craft an identity based on an idealized past, particularly one foisted on the community by the elite.

Section Two: Preservation of Homes and History

As mentioned earlier, in LaGrange the creation myth centered on a supposed offhanded comment of General Lafayette during his 1832 tour of the United States regarding the special landscape of the Troup County area. Berglund considered those trumpeting the myth of the old west lifestyle as “business profiteers,” who capitalized on bringing out connections to history. While their story involved the ideals of the self-made man and ruggedness, LaGrange idealized the beginning of the United States and its rebellion against the British with values such as freedom, justice and “American-ness,” embodied by the iconic figure of Lafayette.¹³ While both San Francisco and LaGrange created identities around a treasured past, they interpreted that past and what it meant to be an American in a similar fashion, producing different, yet similar, regional identities as a result. Indeed, the two cities had similar ideas regarding American identity. The California exposition showed primarily white men in their portrayals of its mining history, leaving the multicultural background of the mining days behind. Likewise, LaGrange

¹² Statues and monuments frequently demonstrated and reinforced socially constructed ideals of masculinity, often portraying war heroes. In some cases the development of these ideals could be traced based upon such monuments. Matthew Mace Barbee, *Race and Masculinity in Southern Memory: History of Richmond, Virginia's Monument Avenue, 1948–1996* (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2013).

¹³ Berglund, “The Days of Old, the Days of Gold, the Days of '49,” 30.

chose as its avatar a white Frenchman, omitting people of color who constituted much of its past and who made up thirty percent of the population.¹⁴ Seemingly this served as nostalgia for the “loss of a romanticized white republic” as they sought a genteel French-connected past to emulate instead of a multicultural present.¹⁵ Attachment to national myths and history was particularly relevant in LaGrange, where historical commemoration could be utilized as a tool of creating public sentiment. Preservationists fostered the sentiment that the town of LaGrange was an important landmark in the American Revolution. LaGrange attempted to prove the connection between their town and the French hero Lafayette and the revolutionary ideals of freedom and liberty. These attempts strove to uplift their town, not only economically but socially.

It was not only the United States that encountered a movement to create a new past with which to identify. In fact, this phenomenon occurred worldwide, including other nations’ bicentennials.¹⁶ Janice Newton, in her exploration of the 1988 bicentennial of European settlement in Australia, found that integrating multiple cultures was integral to identity creation. During the bicentennial of Australia, planners were urged to create an identity that incorporated aspects of Aboriginal culture.¹⁷ This incorporation relied almost entirely on the various stereotypes of Aborigines, often fictional and contradictory. Yet the use of native culture had hardly been popular before the bicentennial. In fact, the white majority maintained a strict divide from the indigenous peoples. They hardly incorporated elements of language, food, clothing, or

¹⁴ Berglund, ““The Days of Old, the Days of Gold, the Days of ’49,” 31.

¹⁵ Ibid., 34.

¹⁶ Historians of preservation frequently discussed this phenomenon as it occurred in Europe and Great Britain. However, preservation and conservation of history occurs worldwide. Diane L. Barthel, *Historic Preservation: Collective Memory and Historical Identity* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1996); Max Page and Randall Mason, *Giving Preservation a History: Histories of Historic Preservation in the United States* (New York: Psychology Press, 2004); Miles Glendinning, *The Conservation Movement: A History of Architectural Preservation: Antiquity to Modernity* (New York: Routledge, 2013).

¹⁷ Janice Newton, “Becoming ‘Authentic’ Australians Through Music,” *Social Analysis: The International Journal of Social and Cultural Practice*, no. 27, *Writing Australian Culture: Text, Society, and National Identity* (April 1990): 94.

medicine into their modes of life and often looked down on aboriginal culture overall. The shift from exclusion to inclusion would not begin to occur until the late 1960s and early 1970s. Bicentennial planners included Aboriginal music in order to define their connection to an overall national history. The nature of celebration allowed one to look back more fondly upon the past, diminishing the importance of stressing a joined society of brotherhood between settler and indigenous populations, even when these clear relationships did not exist.¹⁸

Likewise, LaGrange developed its own preservationist community during the twentieth century, particularly around the nation's bicentennial. Those who planned these acts of preservation often hoped to reinforce a historicized identity in the local area, both assisting tourism and community involvement. Preservation in LaGrange began before the bicentennial, though it definitely attached itself to the trend to preserve old homes. Several of the most prominent homes preserved included the Bellevue home and the First Masonic Lodge of the Long Cane Community. Bellevue, as seen in Figure 16, is a National Historic Landmark located on Ben Hill Street in LaGrange. The Bellevue home was a prime example of the Greek revival style of architecture, featuring tall, white pillars and a wide porch commonly used during the antebellum South. It was the home of the late Senator Benjamin Harvey Hill, a legislator during the mid-1800s and a Confederate soldier. The house was built in 1855 and was a prominent scene for gatherings of important Confederate figures during the Civil War. It was the scene of much drama when Hill was arrested by the United States Government for treason and war crimes. The Senator later moved to Athens, selling the home to Judge Jesse McLendon. It stayed in McLendon's family until 1942, when Bellevue was purchased through a Callaway grant, which also paid for repairs and restoration. The *LaGrange Daily News* praised this house as a "classic antebellum home," inviting the public to attend the ceremony that dedicated Bellevue as

¹⁸ Newton, "Becoming 'Authentic' Australians Through Music," 95.

a landmark. The ceremony itself involved the presentation of a commemorative plaque to Sam Dunn, president of the Woman's Club by Dr. William J. Murtagh, the Keeper of the National Registrar of Historic Places. This event also marked the first National Historic Landmark to be added in Troup County. According to the local newspaper, at the time this was an honor claimed by less than twenty other sites in Georgia. Bellevue attained the honor of being added to the National Register on November 7, 1972.¹⁹ As pointed out by the same newspaper, the criteria a home must meet to be entered into the National Register was based on the "quality of significance in American History, architecture, archaeology, and culture that is present." The house also had to be a distinct landmark that embodied local characteristics. Based on these criteria, another Troup County home was chosen to be placed on the National Register. "Nutwood," located on Big Springs Road, was also placed on the register in 1974, providing more evidence that LaGrange was undergoing a publicized preservation trend during the 1970s.²⁰ Like Bellevue, this home resembled the Greek revival style, as seen in Figure 17.

Local newspapers like the *LaGrange Daily News* also reinforced the point that some homes occupied a special place in the city's past. One of these was the Callaway-Hudson home, located on Old West Point Road. The home itself was one owned by many people since its construction in the mid-nineteenth century, exchanging hands at least eight times according to discovered deeds. Reverend Abner Reeves Callaway, who purchased it in 1878, was the father of Fuller E. Callaway, the industrialist who contributed much funding to later preservation projects. In fact, the city of LaGrange thought so highly of Callaway that they placed a plaque celebrating his work in the town in the then-named Court Square. It read: "In honor of Fuller E. Callaway

¹⁹ "National Historic Site Dedication is Saturday," *LaGrange Daily News*, 22 August 1976; "Historical Homes in County: Historic Bellevue," Clipping, Historical Society Records, Vertical File, Troup County Archives, LaGrange, Georgia. Regardless of the exact number of National Historic Landmarks in Georgia at the time, the *LaGrange Daily News* reported that having such a landmark in the city proper was prestigious.

²⁰ "Home Placed in U.S. Historic Register," *LaGrange Daily News*, 8 June 1974.

Jr., in grateful appreciation of his many benevolences, presented by the citizens of LaGrange and Troup County, 1969 AD.”²¹ As shown in Figure 18, the home was of substantial size, with two stories and many windows. With such high praise, it seemed only natural that a house once inhabited by Callaway would be held in high esteem and noted in the local newspaper. While not added to the National Register, it was obvious that the newspaper editors anticipated an interest in a home connected to local history.

Local authorities utilized these historical homes to increase tourism and community engagement. These efforts included a push to creating walking and driving tours of LaGrange and the surrounding area. Road travel was one of the most popular methods of traveling, especially after the development of the Eisenhower Interstate Highway System of the 1950s. This program assisted in the paving of many roads, allowing for easier travel by motor vehicle. Therefore, appealing to tourists who traveled by car was important.²² One of the driving tours in LaGrange was devoted entirely to the bicentennial celebrations of 1976. The Chattahoochee-Flint Area Planning and Development Commission hosted a driving tour of local landmarks. This ‘Bicentennial Trail of Western Georgia’ featured historic Bellevue on the front of brochures advertising the tour, as seen in Figure 19. The brochure offered a broad history of the five counties it encompassed, Carroll, Coweta, Meriwether, Heard, and Troup. The brochure also noted the importance of the local homes, mentioning the beauty of the Greek revival and Plantation Plain architecture. It also stated that its contents offered the opportunity for visitors to learn about the Western Georgia area. According to the text on the brochure, those who prepared the tour guide booklet wished to encourage trail-goers to become enthused about local culture and history and “pursue it beyond the mere sketches here.” The inside of the brochure provided a

²¹ “Callaway-Hudson Home Changed Hands Often,” *LaGrange Daily News*, 12 Feb. 1974.

²² Dimitri Ioannides and Dallen J. Timothy, *Tourism in the United States: A Spatial and Social Synthesis* (New York: Routledge, 2010): 108-109.

list of fifty-four stops along the driving tour, as well as details for each attraction. This numbered list included many places in LaGrange, such as Bellevue, LaGrange College, the Long Cane Historic District, and Nutwood. Each item description correlated to a number on a map, also in the brochure (as seen in Figure 20).²³

Another brochure, sponsored by the LaGrange Chamber of Commerce, made the point that LaGrange was not only a delightful place to visit but also an enjoyable town to live. The first page of this brochure, portrayed in Figure 21, contained a map of LaGrange and its surrounding areas, including Columbus and Atlanta. The town of LaGrange was even more lucrative as a town to visit or reside in because of its close proximity to these major urban areas. At the center of this map was the Court Square Park and Fountain, which later became the home of the Lafayette Park and Statue. This location was surrounded by a picture frame, referring to the dialogue of the town as being as "pretty as a picture." In the text descriptions of the town, the brochure referred to the historic homes and vegetation around the city, saying that visitors found it a charming and beautiful location to spend their leisure time. It also detailed the town's industry and educational facilities before finally concluding that LaGrange was "Ideal for business and industry...but best of all ideal for living!"²⁴ This again established the connection between revitalization and a healthy economy, as discussed in Chapter Two. Even before Lafayette was placed on the square, the town's reputation as being attractive and cultured was defined as important by such groups as the LaGrange Chamber of Commerce, who even encouraged, through such mediums as this brochure, people to move to LaGrange.

²³ Chattahoochee-Flint Area Planning and Development Commission, Bicentennial Trail of Western Georgia, LaGrange, Georgia: Chattahoochee-Flint Area Planning and Development Commission, 1976.

²⁴ LaGrange Chamber of Commerce, LaGrange in Troup County Georgia: Pretty As a Picture...Plus!, LaGrange, Georgia: LaGrange Chamber of Commerce, circa 1940.

Alongside the architecture and homes of influential citizens, other aspects of LaGrange history began to be celebrated during the 1960s and 1970s. The city memorialized its history as a mill town, celebrating the local working class who worked in its factories. Two historic markers were placed at the site of the Troup Factory and the Courthouse, honoring the first textile mill in Troup County as well as George Michael Troup, the first town governor. Local groups and citizens were integral to the commemoration of the town's history in relation to these homes and landmarks. The markers were funded by the Historic Chattahoochee Commission, the Ocfuskee Historical Society, and the Troup County Board of Commissioners. As with many other commemorative acts, the public was also invited to attend the dedication of the markers at the Troup Factory site.²⁵ These acts of preservation were highly publicized and promoted in the local paper, *LaGrange Daily News*, and were also featured in the later bicentennial celebrations such as local tours of homes.

The largest of these tours of homes took place during the 1776 bicentennial – the “Vive LaGrange” tour. Vive LaGrange was the Roses and Garden Council theme for its Standard Flower Show and Home and Garden Tour. As shown by the guide brochure (Figure 22), the tour featured five LaGrange homes, the Bellevue grounds, Ferrell Gardens, and the LaGrange College.²⁶ The college stop included a display of the Lafayette Collection in the archives, which not only housed artifacts relevant to Lafayette but also a collection of paintings by Charles Hargens that paid tribute to landmark events in the Marquis' life. The overall goal was to present a town that paid tribute to the country's “elegance, her cultural environment, her patriotism, her industry, and her religious heritage,” all seemingly embodied in the history now exhibited in

²⁵ “Ceremony Set to Cite George Troup, Factory,” *LaGrange Daily News*, 18 June, 1975.

²⁶ The Elms and Roses Garden Club Council, *Vive LaGrange! A Standard Flower Show and Home and Garden Tour, LaGrange, Georgia: The Elms and Roses Garden Club Council, 1976.*

LaGrange.²⁷ In fact, LaGrange Mayor Gardner Newman agreed with these sentiments, saying that the commemorative acts served as a means to “give people the opportunity...to express their love of country, learn more of their national heritage, and leave behind some meaningful and tangible evidence of the Bicentennial emphasis.”²⁸ Those planning the tours of homes saw preservation as a means to build a united community under a presented history. However, as previously stated, this unification was under the control of the elite, who had unstated goals of re-writing local history, transforming it into an ideal not representative of the entire LaGrange population. In particular, this history omitted the narrative and representation of African Americans.

Section Three: LaGrange and Issues of Race

Despite the large amount of African Americans living in LaGrange, there was a definite lack of persons of color in the story of Lafayette and the bicentennial celebrations. In fact, according to the 1960 census records, sixty-six percent of the LaGrange population was characterized as white, with approximately thirty percent characterized as African American.²⁹ With such a large African American population, one might assume a strong community involvement. Though African Americans did not influence the LaGrange community in public spaces, such as the Lafayette Square, they were drawn to their local black churches as centers of cultural and community development. Oliver N. Greene Sr., an African American resident of Troup County, studied this phenomenon in his book *From the Brush Arbor to the Temple Beautiful*. He was president of the Troup County Historical Society when his book was published

²⁷ “Elms, Roses Tour of Homes to Include Historic Bellevue,” *LaGrange Daily News*, 6 April, 1976.

²⁸ “Local Bicentennial Events Recorded for History,” *LaGrange Daily News*, 18 November, 1976.

²⁹ University of Virginia Library, “Historical Census Browser,” *University of Virginia*, last modified 2007, <http://mapserver.lib.virginia.edu/php/county.php>.

in 1995. In it he explained that "Black churches provided a bridge over troubled water."³⁰ This implied that the historical situation in the United States, and LaGrange, was not as calm or content for all peoples as those championing the connection to Lafayette wished to portray. Yet this did not mean that African Americans did not attempt to play a role in the development of community identity. Those with considerably more influence and backing, such as LaGrange College, Callaway Foundation, and the primarily white City Council, exercised more power over what happened in the city. For instance, during the 1970 integration of local school, Ethel Kight High School was renamed to Lee's Crossing Middle School despite petitions from local African Americans to keep the name. Ethel Kight was a prominent figure in the African American community during the time, playing a strong role in the education of African Americans. While the school was eventually changed back to honor Ethel Kight in 1996, this instance provided evidence that local African Americans had little agency in the surrounding area, particularly when it came to changes in space names.³¹

The removal of negative implications of racial injustice from the created history of LaGrange was also evident in the relocation of the Confederate statue that once stood in Court Square by the courthouse. It was placed there in 1902 and faced south so it was easily viewable by train depot visitors. When the courthouse was re-built in 1904 the statue was turned westward so that it sat at the entranceway of the building. In 1936 the courthouse burned down. When it was replaced in 1939 the statue was moved to the new building front, facing east. It was not until the 1970s that it was moved to a "more convenient location" at its own park in the north part of

³⁰ Oliver N. Greene Sr., *From the Brush Arbor to the Temple Beautiful* (Columbus, Georgia: Quill Publications, 1995); "'Black Churches: From Brush Arbor to Temple Beautiful': Educator's Book Charts Local Black Church History," *LaGrange Daily News*, February 23, 1995, 2.

³¹ Clark Johnson, interview by Rachael Cofield, Troup County Archives, March 13, 2015.

town.³² While no insidious reasoning was ever given for moving the Confederate statue, its movement characterized a partial removal of Confederate influence and history from the town. However, the town still intended to allow the monument to remain in the public view, though not in the most publicized public space, which was the newly constructed Lafayette Square. In fact, the local Ivy Garden Club president requested that they be given charge over the maintenance of the Confederate soldier statue, implying that while Confederate history was not a focal point of the community, it was still important to some citizens.³³ The displacement of the Confederate monument in favor of the national monument of Lafayette also demonstrated the transition away from a local, southern history to a nationally-oriented history.

Even the bicentennial celebrations in the 1970s, which town elites claimed represented the national and local town community identity, omitted the history of African Americans. In LaGrange, the history of African Americans was not incorporated into the downtown Lafayette Square, creating a prominent public space that allowed no room for contestation with the intended narrative. Matthew Mace Barbee, in his *Race and Masculinity in Southern Memory*, argued that race was culturally constructed and that memorial sites served as a window into the ideology of local peoples, allowing and disallowing community involvement.³⁴ Minority groups were underrepresented in the culture and collective identity Henry hoped to create. By not representing African Americans, planners in LaGrange perpetuated the marginalization of a portion of their community, even to the point of suggesting, by omission of representation, that they were not a part of the community identity the town elite wished to create.

³² Clark Johnson, interview by Rachael Cofield, Troup County Archives, March 13, 2015.

³³ "Confederate Statue Here to be Relocated," *LaGrange Daily News*, 7 July, 1976, 1.

³⁴ Matthew Mace Barbee, *Race and Masculinity in Southern Memory: History of Richmond, Virginia's Monument Avenue, 1948–1996* (Lanham, Maryland Lexington Books, 2013).

Lafayette The transferring the statue of the Confederate statue out of the public eye to a more secluded location and positioning the statue of Lafayette in a more prominent place represented LaGrange's attempts to subvert the narrative while still not entirely removing itself from its past. However, the transfer clearly demonstrated the intent of Henry and other town planners to associate with Lafayette and a larger, national identity instead of a Confederate or Southern identity. As before, Henry demonstrated he was more interested in portraying his preferred narrative than he was in speaking out against the casual racism of others, especially if such racism was evident in works crediting him with bettering the town of LaGrange. Instead of cultivating an all-inclusive history, Henry and the other town planners chose to maintain a history representing the hegemonic narrative. This allowed for the concealing of problematic elements of history, such as slavery, and the creation of a new, superficial history to which people could cling. Issues of race were neglected in the construction of the Lafayette Park in large part because the space was created by the white elite. The placement excluded African Americans because it was in a center of white power. They remained underrepresented in LaGrange, despite comprising a large percent of the population in the city.

Preservation played an important role in crafting LaGrange's historical ties, particularly for the use of presenting a new cultural community. These ideas were not new to preservationists, who in many towns around the United States and around the world utilized history to craft a preferred local identity, often connecting this local identity to a larger national one. Many of these efforts attempted to utilize the concepts of larger national history and the colonial ideas of freedom and equality in this identity. For LaGrange, the preservation of houses and local landmarks enabled the creation of culture that members of the community could engage in and foster. Homes such as Bellevue and landmarks such as Court Square (and later

Lafayette Square) served as the means through which LaGrange cultivated sentiments of local culture and heritage, using these places as ways to encourage tourism and community involvement. The town planners sought to incorporate local Southern history with a larger national narrative. These houses and landmarks were then used in larger celebrations of culture, such as the bicentennial. The local media also helped create interest in local history and motivate citizen involvement. LaGrange used preservation to create identity and then teach that identity to visitors and locals alike. Yet this identity was removed from a large portion of the LaGrange citizenry – the African American community. This chapter built upon the concepts of preservation and explains how efforts of preservation provided a context for social issues, creating an environment that celebrated history while omitting a related history of slavery and oppression.

Figure 16 - River LaGrange, "Bicentennial of LaGrange, Georgia,"
http://www.bicentennialoflagrange.org/about-the-bicentennial/ (LaGrange, Georgia) [Accessed The Belle
vue, (LaGrange, Georgia) 19th November 2015]



Figure 16 – Rivers Langley, "Bellevue (LaGrange, Georgia)," [http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bellevue_\(LaGrange,_Georgia\).JPG#/media/File:Bellevue_\(LaGrange,_Georgia\).JPG](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bellevue_(LaGrange,_Georgia).JPG#/media/File:Bellevue_(LaGrange,_Georgia).JPG) (accessed March 17, 2015).



Figure 17 – Michael Kitchens, “Nutwood, Historic Home by Collin Rogers,” photograph, *Troup County Photograph Collection*, March 2013.



Figure 18 – “Callaway-Hudson Home (1201 Vernon Road),” Coleman Library, photograph, *Troup County Photograph Collection*, n.d.

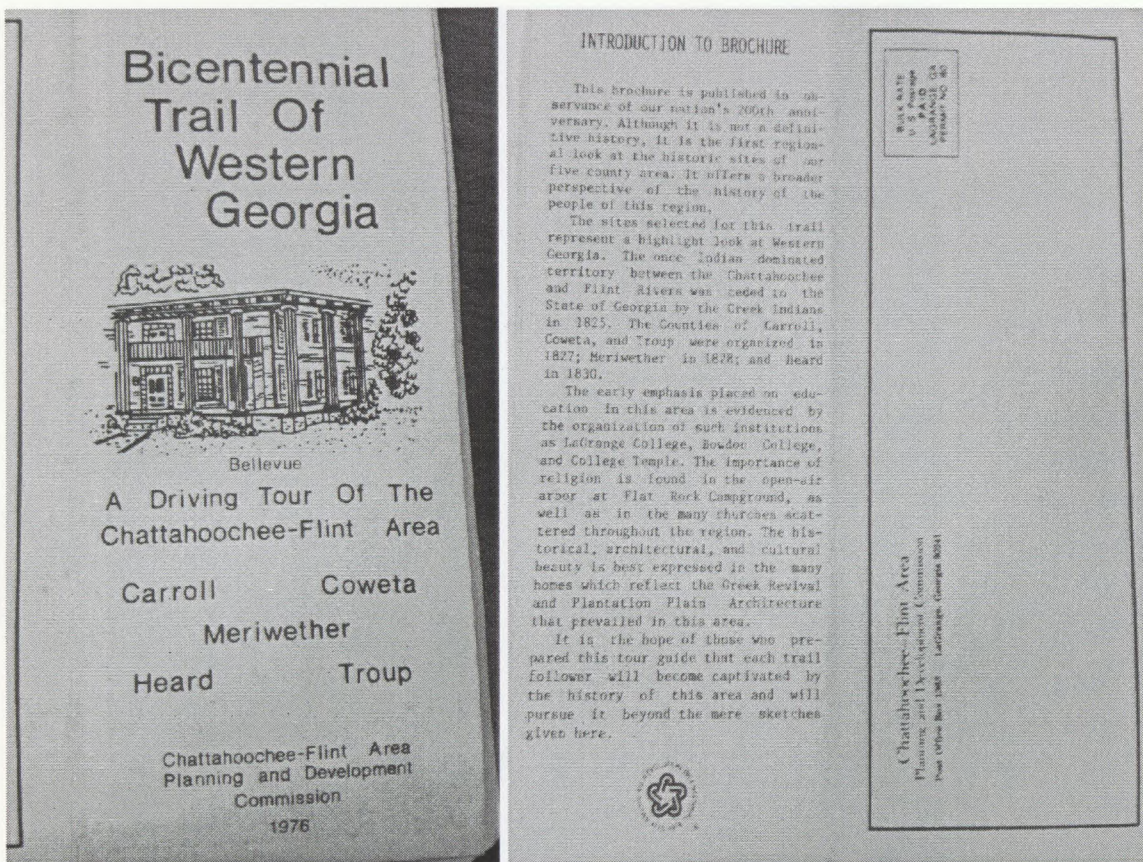


Figure 19 – Chattahoochee-Flint Area Planning and Development Commission, *Bicentennial Trail of Western Georgia*, LaGrange, Georgia: Chattahoochee-Flint Area Planning and Development Commission, 1976.

Figure 20 – Chattahoochee-Flint Area Planning and Development Commission, *Bicentennial Trail of Western Georgia Map*, LaGrange, Georgia: Chattahoochee-Flint Area Planning and Development Commission, 1976.

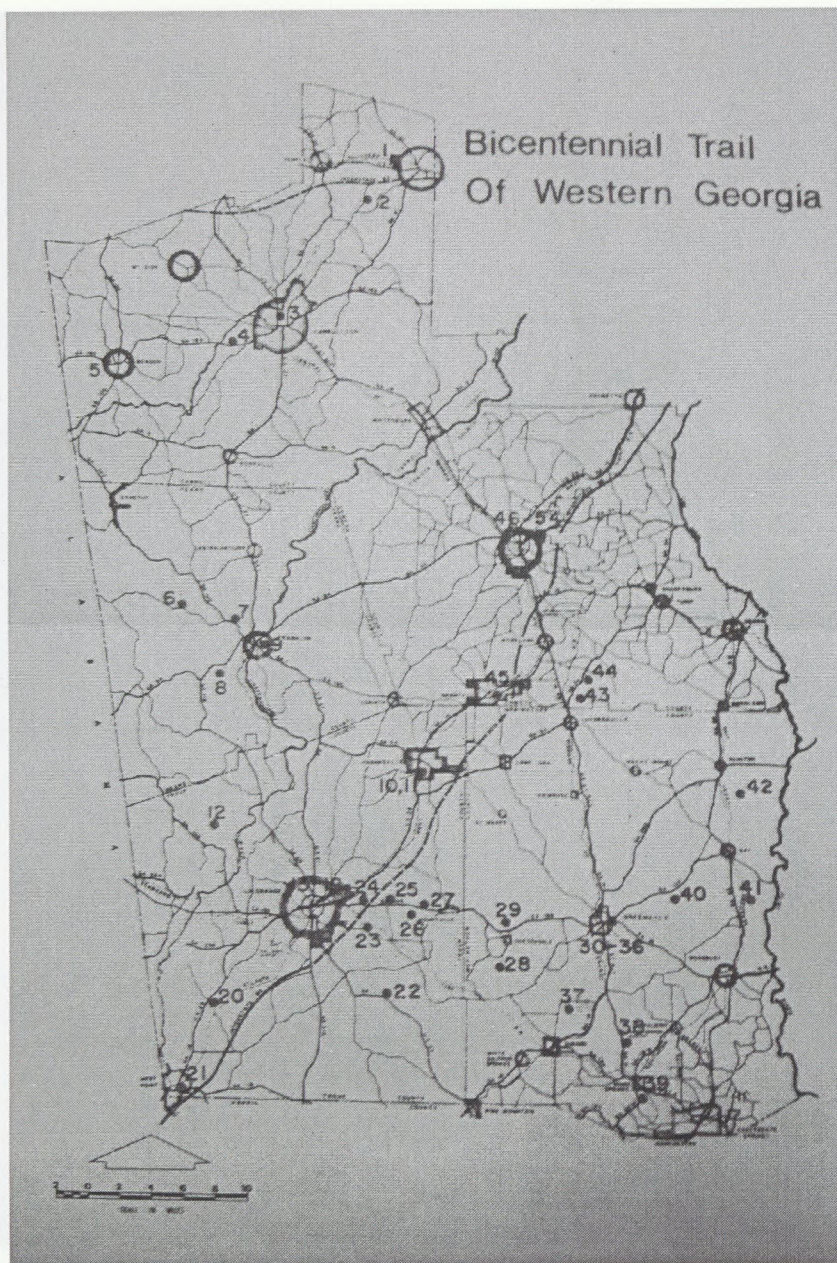


Figure 20 – Chattahoochee-Flint Area Planning and Development Commission, *Bicentennial Trail of Western Georgia Map*, LaGrange, Georgia: Chattahoochee-Flint Area Planning and Development Commission, 1976.

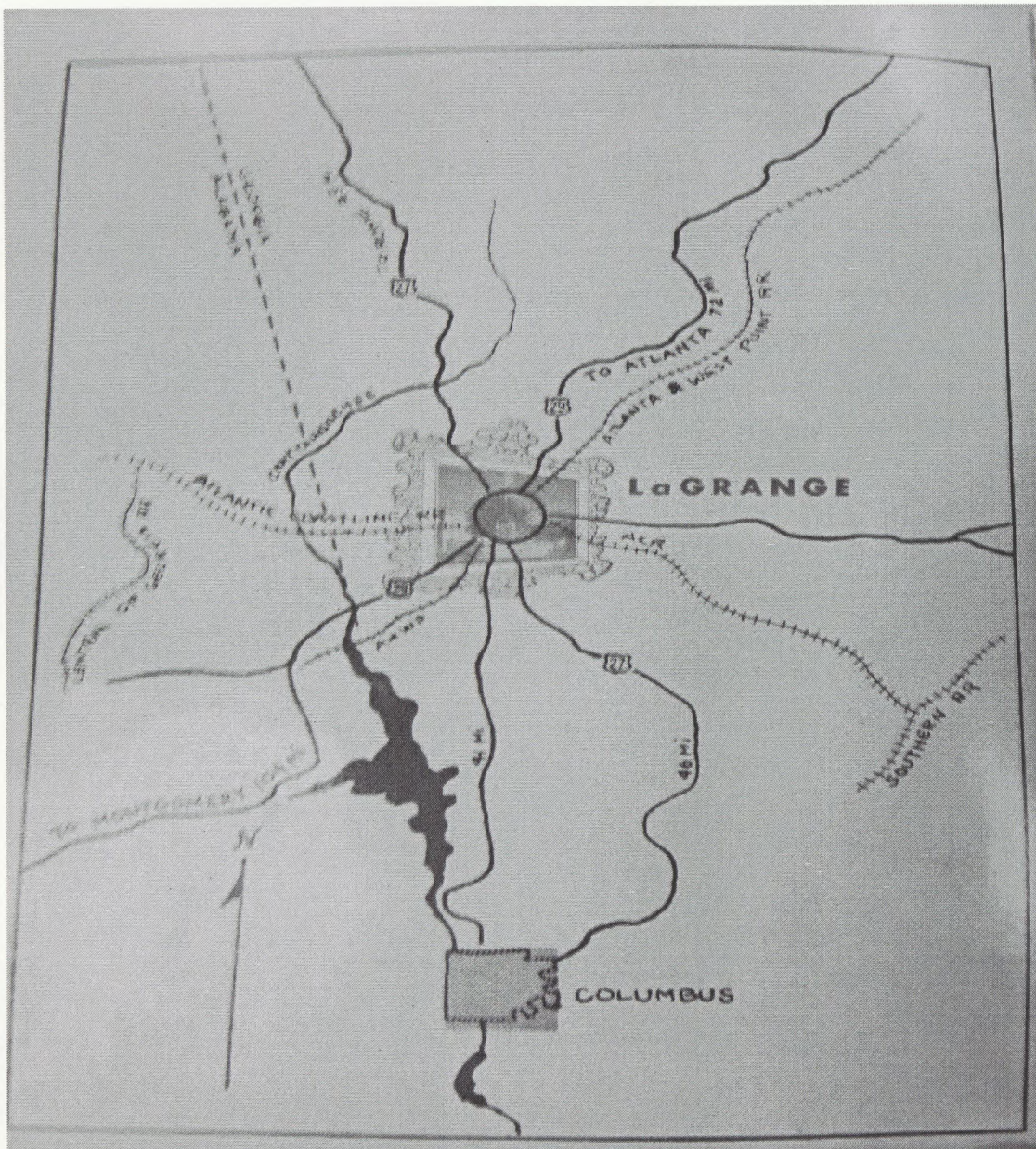


Figure 21 – LaGrange Chamber of Commerce, *LaGrange in Troup County Georgia: Pretty As a Picture...Plus!*, LaGrange, Georgia: LaGrange Chamber of Commerce, circa 1940.

VIVA LAGRANGE!

A STANDARD FLOWER SHOW AND HOME AND GARDEN TOUR

April 9, 1976 • 1:00 P.M. until 5:00 P.M.
April 10, 1976 • 11:00 A.M. until 4:00 P.M.

Sponsored by

THE ELMS AND ROSES GARDEN CLUB COUNCIL, LAGRANGE, GEORGIA

Holly Garden Club

Pine Needle Garden Club

Iris Garden Club

Plumbago Garden Club

Ivy Garden Club

Tallman Garden Club

Nocturne Garden Club

Willowood Garden Club

Members of

Redbud District

Garden Club of Georgia, Inc.

National Council of State Garden Clubs, Inc.

OUR APPRECIATION TO:

The Homeowners

LaGrange Woman's Club

LaGrange College

LaGrange College Faculty Wives

John Lawrence, Art Department, LaGrange College

Mrs. S. E. Abercrombie, Consultant

Mrs. A. Guinn Vaughn, Program Design

Greyhound Bus Lines

A Bicentennial Salute...

1 ...to Her Elegance

Home and Garden of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Rogers, Moody Bridge Road

One of the oldest homes in Troup County, this house has large rooms filled with numerous ornate Victorian pieces. (Class 1, Artistic Division) Eight floral designs reflecting the elegance of the bygone Victorian era

2 ...to Her History

Bellevue, Ben Hill Street

This stately, antebellum home of Confederate Senator Benjamin Harvey Hill was built between 1853 and 1855. It is one of the best examples of Greek Revival architecture in Georgia

A. Wildflower Exhibit

B. Gardening Publications Display

...to the Indians, Our First Settlers

Bellevue, Junior Division

Class 1 - "Happy Hunting Ground" (Grades 3 and 4)

Arrangements using Indian weapons

Class 2 - "War Paint" (Grades 5 and 6)

Arrangements emphasizing color

Class 3 - "Down the Oculusee Trail" (Grades 7 through 9)

Interpretive arrangements using natural materials

3 ...to Her Cultural Environment

Home and Garden of Dr. and Mrs. Weights Henry, 1102 Vernon Road

Nestled behind large magnolia trees, this home of the president of LaGrange College was built in 1935. The outstanding accessories in the home are items collected from President Henry's extensive travels. (Class 2, Artistic Division) Eight floral designs portraying the important role of literature, the arts, and the enrichment of travel to our citizens

4 ...to Her Beauty

Ferrell Gardens, boxwood gardens of Mr. and Mrs. Fuller Callaway, 1200 Vernon Road

Covering a series of six terraces, the spiritual atmosphere of the garden abounds in motifs and designed plantings. Started in 1941 by Sara Coleman Ferrell, the gardens are a haven for rare trees and plants, as well as seasonal flowers

5 ...to Her Patriotism

Home of Dr. and Mrs. M. L. Reid, Willowcrest Way

This home is decorated in primitive art of Early America with original Tole pieces and numerous needlepoint pieces. (Class 3, Artistic Division) Eight floral designs interpreting the heroism of early patriots

6 ...to Her Industry

Home of Dr. and Mrs. Tom Malone, 1018 Country Club Road

A rustic, split-rail fence introduces this traditional country home affording a lovely view of the wooded area overlooking a lake. The blue color scheme of the formal areas accent many oriental accessories. (Class 4, Artistic Division) Eight floral designs depicting the contributions of our industrial growth and/or suggesting future technological advancements

7 ...to Her Religious Heritage

Home and Garden of Dr. and Mrs. Cecil Major, 842 Lakewood Drive

Tall pines and a rustic split-rail fence greet visitors to this impressive English country home featuring a number of Victorian clocks and a collection of old tools. (Class 5, Artistic Division) Eight floral designs expressing the influence of traditional religious beliefs in our community

8 ...to Lafayette, Who Named Our Town

LaGrange College, Smith Building and Hawkes Gallery (Educational Exhibits)

A. Exhibits of paintings depicting episodes in the life of General Lafayette by artist Charles Hargens (non-competitive) Smith Building

B. A Bust of Lafayette by Jean Houdon with a French flower arrangement as a tribute (non-competitive) Smith Building - Characteristics of French arrangements shown

C. Southern Estate Exhibition by Maxon, Inc., Atlanta, Georgia, sponsored by the Georgia and National Council of Arts (non-competitive) Hawkes Gallery

9 ... to Her Trials and Traditions Simpson Room, LaGrange College (Horticulture Exhibits)

SECTION A "Domestic Tranquility" House Plants
 Class 1 - Flowering potted plants
 Class 2 - Foliage potted plants
 Class 3 - Hanging baskets
 Class 4 - Terrariums
 Class 5 - Cacti and Succulents
 Class 6 - Dish Gardens
 Class 7 - Plants grown in greenhouses or under lights

SECTION B "Fleur de Lis" African Violets
 Class 8 - Purple
 Class 9 - Blue and Lavender
 Class 10 - Pink
 Class 11 - White and variegated

SECTION C "Ruffles and Flourishes" Shrubs
 Class 12 - Flowering except azaleas
 Class 13 - Non-flowering
 Class 14 - Evergreen
 Class 15 - Azaleas

SECTION D "One if by land..." Trees
 Class 16 - Flowering
 Class 17 - Evergreen

SECTION E "A Burst of Glory" Bulbs, Corms, Tubers
 Class 18 - Narcissus
 Class 19 - Tulips
 Class 20 - Bearded Iris
 Class 21 - Dutch Iris
 Class 22 - Any other cut specimens not aforementioned
 Class 23 - Any other bulbous plant specimens

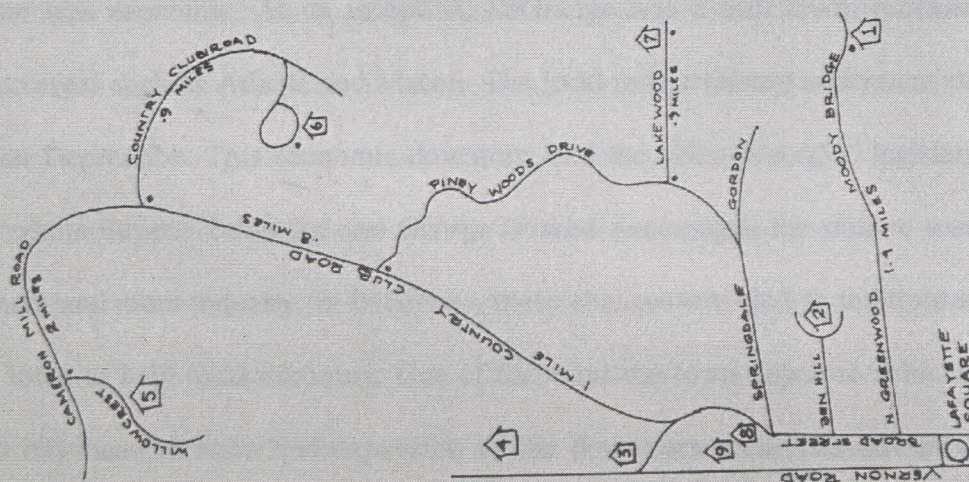


Figure 22 – The Elms and Roses Garden Club Council, *Vive LaGrange! A Standard Flower Show and Home and Garden Tour Map*, LaGrange, Georgia: The Elms and Roses Garden Club Council, 1976.

Conclusion: The Aftermath and Continued Presence of the Created Identity

Overall, this thesis sought to explain how American towns created a community identity by constructing imagined historical ties. In the case of LaGrange, the bicentennial served as an excuse to utilize a loose connection to a French hero of the American Revolution, the Marquis de Lafayette, who toured the United States in 1825 and visited the Southeast at the request of Governor Troup of Georgia. Indeed, the connection between LaGrange and Lafayette is based on a legend, or a passing remark at best: at one point, Lafayette might have related the area that later became Troup County to his wife's estate in France – La Grange. The bicentennial served as an opportunity to recover the town's connection to this history, and the town seized it with unprecedented energy. The reasons are various, and often implicit.

One of the reasons for cultivating local culture and history by establishing a tie with Lafayette was economic. At its inception, LaGrange was a mill town, processing cotton for export to areas such as Atlanta and Macon. The local mill economy underwent struggles during the Great Depression. This economic downturn, and the "New Georgia" legislation spurred on by Governors Eugene Talmadge and George Busbee, encouraged the state to search for foreign investment and more industry. In LaGrange, these changes emerged as multiple economic plans for the town to help local economy. One of the ways the town hoped to achieve this goal was through city beautification and expansion of the downtown area. The downtown/Main Street portion of LaGrange underwent many changes during this time. The bicentennial celebrations provided LaGrange the opportunity to continue this trend of downtown revitalization. The Lafayette Park and statue were built at the center of the Main Street square, an easily celebrated heart of downtown. Town planners intended to increase foot traffic to the surrounding shops through beautification of the square. The establishment of the park was also intended to boost

tourism to the area. Tourism based upon historical ties was popular in the mid-twentieth century. For LaGrange, city planners justified the embellishing of town history by saying it helped the economy. Yet the efforts to create a marketable identity did not stop with beautification and downtown revitalization. The bicentennial commission in LaGrange also produced goods related to the bicentennial in the hopes that they might sell such items to the public. These goods took the form of commemorative stamps and medals portraying the Lafayette statue. According to those in LaGrange, economic concerns weighed heavily when considering bicentennial efforts and a newly created historical identity. By utilizing a connection to local history, LaGrange officials hoped to boost the economy through beautification, tourism, and fetishizing of cultural products.

The bicentennial in LaGrange must also be understood within the context of burgeoning preservationist movements during the 1970s. Other towns, such as Savannah, Georgia, saw great success with their preservation programs. In general, preservation was a movement organized by elites and local interest groups in order to promote economic gain and a sense of community. In many cases, these people regarded the past with a sense of nostalgia, and used a local connection to history as a means to distance the town from other regional problems. The bicentennial was a means to do this. In LaGrange preservation often centered on local figures and homes, such as Fuller E. Callaway and the Bellevue home. There was a surge of restoration projects and many homes were deemed "historical." These homes and locales were considered valid tourist destinations, and many local groups, such as the Chattahoochee-Flint Area Planning and Development Commission and the LaGrange Chamber of Commerce, sought to market them in brochures and tour guides. The bicentennial celebrations accompanied these efforts, resulting in a Vive LaGrange Flower Show and Garden Tour. The Roses and Garden Council of LaGrange

worked with Waights G. Henry to showcase the extensive efforts of the town to preserve and cultivate the town's history in relation to the Marquis de Lafayette.

The final reason for promoting local history was not explicitly stated by those who pushed for the changes. In fact, the reasons to promote collective memory are connected to broader issues studied by geographers and historians. Geographers noted that the history commemorated in public spaces often mirrored normative social orders and that these memorial landscapes could be assessed in three frameworks. This thesis uses their text metaphor to explain the meaning behind the authorship of a landscape and how they hoped that this "text" would be accepted. In the case of the bicentennial in LaGrange, the text to be read was the Lafayette Park and statue. Historians also noted how space served as a means to promote a collective identity in small towns. However, in many cases the history memorialized was a form of American Exceptionalism. Southern identity also played a role in the development of collective memory in LaGrange. The darker past of the South, one of slavery and inequality, created a reason to identify less with the South and more with a national (and in many cases northernized) history. In LaGrange, the elite had the power to control what history was worthy of commemoration. Associating the town with the Revolutionary hero Lafayette allowed those in charge to create a community identity around ideals of freedom and equality. However, this narrative also hid the potentially dark past and present dealing with economic and racial inequality in LaGrange. Despite a large population of African Americans in the community, they were not represented in the new public space created during the bicentennial. Instead, this new historical identity was incomplete, marginalizing and hiding the narratives of minority groups.

In the 1970s, influential people in LaGrange, such as Waights G. Henry, hoped to utilize the bicentennial of the American Revolution in order to create a new community identity based

upon supposed ties to history. He and other town officials attempted to embellish these ties to Lafayette and a national history in order to subvert the traditional narrative of the town. Their efforts were motivated by concerns about the economy, the preservationist movement, tourism, and social inequality. LaGrange during the bicentennial celebrations during the 1970s was a town that wanted to boost the economy and foster community involvement where everyone adhered to the same town identity. The history based on Lafayette and the enlightenment ideals he presumably represented was supported by the LaGrange elite, such as Henry and the all white city council. However this history and identity ignored the more uncomfortable southern past of slavery and intolerance, a past that continued even after the end of the Civil War. This created identity was a way to reinforce the hegemonic historical narrative, regardless of the reasons provided by Henry and the other town planners of LaGrange.

The bicentennial of the American Revolution offered the opportunity for cities to announce their connections to history. For LaGrange, this meant the ties to American Revolutionary hero Marquis de Lafayette, who once visited the surrounded area. This allowed LaGrange officials to craft a new historical identity based upon the ideals of this hero, tying LaGrange to a larger national history. Mill towns, particularly those large in size such as Atlanta, and the aftermath of civil and economic unrest were topics of interest to many historians, particularly during the New South era. However, despite the claims that Georgia was to abandon old ways of economics and civil rights violations, these issues continued to plague the region, proving that creating a new identity centered around equality and economic profit was more difficult than thought possible. Many cities then turned to history and preservation in order to alleviate their economic ills, hoping that such attempts to build local culture would in turn bring in tourism. These efforts were complemented by economic revitalization plans. The effects

planners intended (and at times achieved) were seen through their efforts of memorialization and created spaces and monuments. City records, personal correspondence, and newspaper attention provide glimpses into how planners hoped to achieve their goals of boosting economies and crafting local identity. This thesis seeks to establish a connection between the created ties to history between Lafayette, France, and LaGrange identity. LaGrange in the 1970s represented a town hoping to boost its economy and increase community involvement, further codifying this identity, while profiting on using a popularized history during the bicentennial. A history related to Revolutionary heroes and enlightenment ideals was perpetuated by the LaGrange elite, such as the city council, LaGrange College President Waights G. Henry, and the Callaway Foundation. Yet it refused to acknowledge an uncomfortable past of slavery and intolerance, one that likely continued well after the end of the Civil War. By representing only the hegemonic narrative, this new identity served as a way to reinforce white dominance, despite the claims of grandeur made by those like Henry.

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Appendix A: LaGrange Timeline

Date	LaGrange
1825	Marquis de Lafayette visits the area on his American tour
1828	City declared "LaGrange" after Lafayette's estates near Paris at the suggestion of Colonel Julius Caesar Alford, who overheard Lafayette mention similarities between west Georgia and his French estates
1948	Original Court Square and Park constructed
1968	"Industrial Diversification" program begins under the Callaway Foundation
1973	Town square/park re-named Lafayette Square
September 24, 1974	LaGrange College leases the bronze replica Lafayette statue to the city of LaGrange
October 8, 1974	Court Square and Park renamed Lafayette Square and Park by LaGrange City Council
January 1, 1975	Lafayette Statue moved from holding place at the Citizens and Southern Bank to its final resting place at the center of the Lafayette Square
January 8, 1975	City Council adopts new city emblem, featuring Lafayette heraldry
January 16, 1976	Count Rene de Chambrun, great great grandson of Lafayette, places wreath at the newly placed statue in a public ceremony
	'Vive LaGrange!' tour of homes displays local historic homes and Lafayette Collection at the LaGrange College Archives
April 17, 1976	'We Love America Day' parade tours downtown LaGrange as visitors hear music from multiple bands – 530 th Air National Guard Band from Dobbins Air Force Base, the LaGrange High School Band, Troup High Band, and the LaGrange Junior High Band
July 1976	LaGrange Mayor Gardner Newman requests that Confederate Statue be relocated
August 1976	Dedication of Bellevue as a National Historic Landmark
February 2001	Lafayette Statue cleaned and rededicated in a public ceremony

Appendix B: List of Historical Actors

Fuller E. Callaway Foundation – Charitable organization located in Troup County, Georgia. Foundation funded many local projects. Donated 12,500 dollars for the original Court Square Park and Fountain.. Callaway Foundation also played a key role in building up historic homes, including the antebellum home Bellevue. The Foundation provided a grant purchasing and repairing the home for the Women's Club in 1942. Callaway continued its restoration funding into the 1970s. In fact, the Foundation is still active in the Troup County area.

Leland D. Case – Former editor of the Paris Edition of the *Herald-Tribune*. His correspondence with Dr. Henry resulted in new Lafayette-related requisitions for the LaGrange College. He heard that Henry wished to build up a Lafayette Collection and introduced him to a descendant of Lafayette – the Count Rene de Chambrun, insisting that Henry plan a trip to France.

Dr. Waights G. Henry – Waights G. Henry was born in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. He later attended Emory University, Birmingham Southern, and Yale University, achieving both a Master of Divinity and Doctor of Divinity Degree. He served three pulpit charges and worked on the Board of Education in North Georgia before relocating to LaGrange. It was here in 1948 that he became the LaGrange College President. He was one of the leading figures in the bicentennial celebrations in LaGrange, announcing his hopes for the town's aspiring Lafayette-connected identity well before the 1970s. He served the community on multiple city committees, including the LaGrange Bicentennial Committee, until he retired in

LaGrange College – Private college located in LaGrange, Georgia. Dr. Henry was president from the years 1948 to 1978. The college was active in the community under his tenure, procuring many items for a new Lafayette Collection in the college archives as well as leasing the Lafayette Statue to the city of LaGrange in 1974.

